

**ANTHOLOGY
OF MAGAZINE VERSE**

FOR 1958

BY

WILLIAM STANLEY BRAITHWAITE

AND

MARGARET HALEY CARPENTER

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William Stanley Braithwaite

and

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Edited by
Margaret Haley Carpenter

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To
WITTER BYNNER

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FOREWORD

May Lamberton Becker once called William Stanley Braithwaite's annual anthologies of periodical poetry "a national institution," and so indeed they proved to be. For these anthologies, published from 1913 through 1929, were the first yearly poetry anthologies ever to appear in America. As a matter of fact, it was Mr. Braithwaite who introduced Edward J. O'Brien to his publisher and suggested that he edit a similar series of short story anthologies, which he did, starting in 1915. And it was Mr. Braithwaite with whom this same publisher discussed, a little later, the idea of bringing out a series of annual anthologies of plays, which Burns Mantle was asked to edit. Actually, the origin of all of these annual anthologies goes back to the inspired vision of one man: William Stanley Braithwaite.

First appearing just at the time of the poetic renaissance of the early twentieth century, the Braithwaite poetry anthologies played a tremendously important part in the development of this movement. By making the recent work of America's most accomplished poets available to a large audience, in a far greater measure than it was possible for individual magazines to do, these volumes helped to establish and further the reputation of many writers, and they also stimulated the reading and appreciation of poetry, at a time when a receptive audience eagerly awaited just such material. There has never been another series of annual poetry anthologies which has commanded the literary excitement, the prestige, or the popularity ac-

corded these volumes. Many a poet will still recall the shiver of delight and justifiable pride that he felt upon learning that his work was being included in one of these anthologies.

William Stanley Braithwaite was eminently fitted for his role as the distinguished editor of these collections, for he had been a literary editor of the *Boston Transcript* since 1904, bringing out a yearly evaluation of the poetic scene in that paper, which was always widely anticipated. By 1913, he had already published two volumes of his own poetry, *Lyrics of Life and Love* and *The House of Falling Leaves*, and he had compiled *The Book of Elizabethan Verse*, *The Book of Georgian Verse*, and *The Book of Restoration Verse*. He had also served as one of the three judges for *The Lyric Year*, a competitive collection of American poetry, the announcement of which had so quickened the poetic pulse of this country that it attracted some ten thousand entries by nearly two thousand poets; appearing in 1912, this book helped to kindle the great poetic rebirth of interest that was already starting to blaze in America. An atmosphere of poetic absorption and enthusiasm, such as it is difficult for us to imagine today, pervaded the nation at that time. The Poetry Society of America had been established in 1910; *Poetry, A Magazine of Verse*, was founded in 1912, and by 1913, when the first Braithwaite anthology appeared, a clamor of new singing voices was being heard; poets were casting off old styles of writing and turning back to the language of everyday speech; innovations of rhyme and rhythm were being attempted; regional writing was being undertaken with strength and vigor; various experi-

mental poetic schools were springing up, some to vanish overnight, while others stained the main stream of our country's literature permanently with the distinctive coloring of their essence.

This sudden revival of interest in poetry caused an avalanche of verse to descend upon the national scene, and to separate the valuable and enduring poems from the rest was a challenging job, requiring unusual skill and discrimination.

An anthologist cannot depend upon his individual taste alone if he is to assemble a comprehensive collection which will have great staying power. He must rely on a much rarer and sounder basic judgment which enables him to recognize poetry of quality and character that will endure through the years, regardless of whether it appeals to him personally or not.

As one turns the pages of these seventeen anthologies today, he is forcefully struck with the fact that William Stanley Braithwaite seems to have been endowed with exactly this type of genius of judgment,—a mystical intuition, a sort of poetic sixth sense, which guided him in his selections. For not only are found in these books numerous poems which have become either exceptionally well-known or actually famous, but the great majority of them are still refreshingly modern in vision, imagination, and message,—and they still leave an impressive impact upon the reader.

A list of the authors who were published in these volumes would read like a *Who's Who of Poetry* through several decades. All styles of work, all regions of the nation, all classes of poets—the young and the old, the eminent and the unknown, the conservative

and the followers of various schools—were included impartially, side by side.

Here, for instance, Robert Frost's provocative interpretations of New England were anthologized for the first time in this country, with a glowing prediction of this poet's future by the editor; here, also, appeared the work of the Imagists—H.D., John Gould Fletcher, Amy Lowell; here were found the penetrating psychological observations of Edwin Arlington Robinson; the revealing and pithy epitaphs of the *Spoon River* characters of Edgar Lee Masters; Alfred Kreymborg's early whimsical fantasies as well as his later, more traditional poems; the spirited ballads of Stephen Vincent Benét and William Rose Benét; Vachel Lindsay's powerful and syncopated rhythms; Lew Sarett's Indian poems; poems in dialect; the work of the "fugitives"—John Crowe Ransom, Donald Davidson, Allen Tate, Merrill Moore, and Robert Penn Warren; the graceful evocations of Wallace Stevens; the lyrics and sonnets of such artists as Sara Teasdale, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Genevieve Taggard, David Morton, and Elinor Wylie; the sprung rhythm of Hart Crane; and the work in free verse by Lola Ridge and a host of others.

The individual poems which were initially anthologized in America in a Braithwaite collection, and which have now become secure in their place in the literature of our country, are too numerous to list. Certainly, a genuine tribute to the editor is the fact that many of the poems he first anthologized became the title poems for books by their authors: *Mountain Interval* by Robert Frost, *Fiddler's Farewell* by Leonora Speyer, *Outside of the World* by Katherine Garrison Chapin, *The Unwilling Gypsy* by Josephine

Johnson, *Sunrise Trumpets* by Joseph Auslander, *Song of a New Hercules* by Leigh Hanes, *Color of Water* by Marjorie Meeker, *Spring Thunder* by Mark Van Doren, *Boy in the Wind* by George Dillon, *This Delicate Love* by Winifred Welles, *Stars and Atoms Have No Size* by A. M. Sullivan, and *The Box of God* by Lew Sarett, to name only a few.

Of particular interest, too, is the work included by a number of writers who became celebrated in other literary fields besides poetry, such as: Hervey Allen, Maxwell Anderson, Faith Baldwin, Henry Bellamann, Willa Cather, John Erskine, William Faulkner, Hermann Hagedorn, DuBose Heyward, Mary Johnston, Howard Mumford Jones, MacKinlay Kantor, Alice Duer Miller, Edward J. O'Brien, James Oppenheim, Josephine Pinckney, Elizabeth Madox Roberts, Cornelia Otis Skinner, Jesse Stuart, Edmund Wilson, and Willard Huntington Wright (S. S. Van Dine).

What anthologist could be certain today that even one of the poems he might select for a modern collection would still, in the year 2000 or later, be worthy of contemporary attention? Yet, the very first Braithwaite anthology of 1913, published forty-five years ago, contained Joyce Kilmer's "Trees," one of the most anthologized poems, since then, in our language. Witter Bynner's "Train-Mates," another exceedingly popular poem, was in this same volume, as was Vachel Lindsay's "The Kallyope Yell." Two years later, in 1915, Robert Frost's "Birches," "The Road Not Taken," and "The Death of the Hired Man," were found along with Lindsay's "The Chinese Nightingale," Edwin Arlington Robinson's "Flammonde," Amy Lowell's "Patterns," and Wallace Stevens's "Peter

Quince at the Clavier." Only an unusually gifted and astute critic with an ear held firmly to the heart of true poetry would have been able to bring together such a distinguished group of poems as these, out of the vast number and many varieties then available.

In the first anthology of 1913, Mr. Braithwaite wrote of the criteria that guided his selections: "I have not allowed any special sympathy with the subject to influence my choice. I have taken the poet's point of view, and accepted his value of the theme he dealt with. The question was: How vital and compelling did he make it? The first test was the sense of pleasure the poem communicated; then to discover the secret of the meaning of the pleasure felt; and in doing so, to realize how much richer one became in a knowledge of the purpose of life by reason of the poem's message."

For his untiring efforts in its behalf, the world of letters owes William Stanley Braithwaite a tremendous debt. No literary history of our country is complete without reference to the impressive and dedicated service which he performed for both poets and poetry. Not only did he rescue many fine poems from the oblivion of magazine publication, but in the section of each anthology called "The Yearbook of American Poetry," he assembled a veritable storehouse of information about the current poets and their work. Each volume contained a comprehensive "Index of Poets and Poems Published in American Magazines" during the past year, a listing of the volumes of poetry published in this country during that time, and an itemized résumé of recent articles and reviews dealing with poetry. Each anthology also contained a thorough

and enlightening introduction summarizing the outstanding poetic events of the past twelve months. All of these features are still of the greatest importance to those engaged in research.

The 1926 edition, appearing in the same year which marked the 150th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, was designated as the Sesqui-Centennial Edition, and included a list of the most significant prizes for poetry awarded in the United States, with their winners, from 1912 through 1926, a list of the most valuable books of poetry and criticism during these years, and a Poet's Biographical Dictionary, which was filled with fascinating nuggets of information. This edition of the anthologies also contained a summary of poetic activities and personalities in various regions of the nation, written by such authorities as Jessie Rittenhouse, James Southall Wilson, George Sterling, William Rose Benét, E. Merrill Root, Thomas Walsh, and Marianne Moore. Miss Moore, who contributed some telling observations on "The New Poetry Since 1912," concluded her article with these words: "That which is weak is soon gone; that which has value does, by some strange perpetuity, live as part of the serious continuation of literature." Many of the poems that Mr. Braithwaite selected have continued to live.

For true beauty and true quality do not, after all, perish with the ages; the passing of years only increases their stature, only makes noble work—the Sapphic fragments, the splendor of the Parthenon, the music of Beethoven—more noble. Time is the severest judge of any creative effort, and time has decided overwhelmingly in favor of the majority of these

poems, proving, as nothing else could do, the excellence of Mr. Braithwaite's foresight and keen judgment of long ago.

*Beauty of the heart
Is evident in temples. . . .*

wrote Witter Bynner in "Train-Mates." And it is, also, evident in poetry, the temples of words which poets build—as are strength of soul and all the other infinite treasures of the spirit. The creators of temples, whether the temples be of marble, of music, or of words, can only build from what is within. Order and harmony within are reflected in order and harmony without: creative order and harmony. Conversely, chaos within means an outward expression of chaotic creative work, a most dismaying and yet most revealing characteristic of a certain trend so prevalent today in all the arts. It is not difficult to read an artist's spiritual depth in what he presents to the world. This, perhaps, explains why some of our contemporary writers are not able to establish contact with their readers; their own spiritual chaos blocks the road to communication. When they say they write for private audiences, they are correct,—the audiences being themselves, the only ones who can comprehend their personal disorder.

"Poetry," wrote John Holmes, "is that amazement you feel when you understand that light can be like a sword, the voice like a hand caressing you, thought like a flower bursting into bloom, or joy like a star falling through the sky . . . Poetry is the coin, out of the dull and leaden handful we throw down in payment for the hours of life, that rings true and clear,

and lies glittering where it falls . . . Poetry is the tree of life packed in a seed and planted in heart and mind, where it takes root, and grows green, and flowers, and is the tree again . . ."

Of such poetry as this were the Braithwaite anthologies made. The poets who appeared in them did not write for private audiences; as all truly supreme artists have been, they were concerned with the universal and timeless themes of joy, sorrow, love, loneliness, death, and beauty, experienced by all men in all ages. And this is one of the secrets of the enduring quality of their work. For unlike some of the poetry we encounter today, these poems communicate with their readers, no matter how deep or dusty the chasm of years which separates poem from reader. They lift their voices, they sing, they speak out clearly and compellingly—and frequently, as in, for example, Robert Frost's "The Road Not Taken," George Dillon's "Fall of Stars," Witter Bynner's "A Thrush in the Moonlight," Elinor Wylie's "Hymn to Earth," and many, many others, they make the reader, who is completely captured by mood and message, cry out in perfect accord with the poet and with John Holmes, "*Yes! Yes! This . . . this is poetry!*"

Because of the hundreds of memorable lines included in the Braithwaite anthologies, many excellent poems and deserving authors could not be included in this collection; and it is not claimed that all of these poems are on the same artistic level. But all have something to say to the reader of today, and here, as in the original books themselves on a larger scale, one may find many kinds of poetic delights. Perhaps this representative group will lead the reader back to the

seventeen anthologies, for there is still golden treasure to be discovered in them.

When this series of anthologies became a casualty of the precarious financial conditions in this country in 1929, poets and poetry lovers everywhere lost a true and valued friend—and one that has never been replaced. In addition to compiling these volumes, and those previously mentioned, Mr. Braithwaite has written or edited a number of others, including: *The Poetry of Thomas S. Jones, Jr.*, with Jessie Rittenhouse and Edward J. O'Brien (1910); *The Poetic Year for 1916* (1916); *The Golden Treasury of Magazine Verse* (1918); *The Story of the Great War* (1919); *The Book of Modern British Verse* (1919); *Victory! Celebrated by 38 American Poets*, with Introduction by Theodore Roosevelt (1919); *Anthology of Massachusetts Poets* (1922); *The Grecian Influence of John Myers O'Hara* (1926); *Our Lady's Choir: A Contemporary Anthology of Verse by Catholic Sisters* (1931); *Selected Poems* (1948); *The Bewitched Parsonage: The Story of the Brontës* (1950).

Forty-five years ago, William Stanley Braithwaite dedicated his first American poetry anthology:

TO THE POETS OF AMERICA

SINGING TODAY

THE SOUL OF THEIR COUNTRY

TRUTH, BEAUTY, BROTHERHOOD

THEIR NAMES ARE TORCHES

His name is also a torch, a torch that will long burn down through the halls of American literature, for the luminous light of his magnificent and unselfish service to the poets and the literary public of this country will not soon be extinguished or forgotten.

Margaret Haley Carpenter

Norfolk, Virginia

August 23, 1958

INTRODUCTION

When I last brought out the *Anthology of Magazine Verse* in 1929, we had come to the end of a poetic era in America. The so-called renaissance of poetry that had begun during the first decade of this century had produced a number of major poets around whom flourished a number of lesser singers who, in another period—for instance between 1870 and 1905—, would have bestowed a brilliant distinction upon our literary history. The twenty-five years of the revival, from 1905 to 1930, were also a period of great public appreciation for poetry, stirred and sustained by the reviewing press, which regarded the art as a significant cultural manifestation of the American people. The press was the most direct way of informing the people about the character and quality of their poets. The often quoted statement of Walt Whitman, that "To have great poets there must be a great audience," was coming true.

The creation of an interested and supporting audience for the art began in the East, led by New England and New York, where the Boston Evening *Transcript* and the *New York Times Book Review* gave serious attention to exploiting the work of new poets. The innovation was not easily accomplished. Jessie Rittenhouse, who was the chief reviewer of poetry for the *New York Times Book Review*, was not always granted the liberality of space she desired, and my own experience on the *Transcript* was at first challenged by the counting-room. When I reviewed the Memorial Edi-

tion of Arthur Upson's *Collected Poems* in two full columns, the owner of the paper, George Mandell, raised a rumpus because he had to pay for so much space given to the reviewing of a single poet. Even the magazines with pretensions to literary guidance as an ornament to their discussions of social and political affairs, such as the *Chicago Dial* under William Morton Payne, would quarterly bunch for review some fifteen or twenty books of poems without much distinction as to quality or promise among them.

The influence of this pioneering in the Eastern press to respect poets and accord them the same attention as given writers in other fields soon found a responsive sympathy in other parts of the country. The so-called "recent slump in poetry" with which the century opened passed into history. I began my annual survey of American poetry in the *Transcript* in 1906. The response to the innovation was immediate and nationwide. But four years were yet to pass before the idea of poetry as a vital influence in American life was institutionalized in the founding of the Poetry Society of America in 1910, and six years before the establishment of the first poetry magazines—Harriet Monroe's *Poetry, A Magazine of Verse* in Chicago, and *The Poetry Journal*, of which I was an editor, in Boston. The publicity given to poetry in the press, the appearance of other poetry magazines in different parts of the country, and the space given in general periodicals like *The New Republic* and *The Freeman*, made the public so conscious of the art that the renaissance took full stride.

All great inspirational movements that stem from the imagination have dim and uncertain beginnings.

Walter Pater tells us that the great Italian Renaissance had its birth in the thirteenth century French story of "Aucassin and Nicolette." I like to think, although others may disagree, that the 1906 *Transcript* survey article on the magazines and the poets, out of which the Anthology grew, was the beginning of this glorious revival.

It was a revival which thrived not only on publicity but also upon controversy. Convention and revolt rode the high winds of both practice and criticism. The spirit as well as the craft of the art was enmeshed in multitudinous definitions that tended to obscure vital standards. The influence of English traditions, which had dominated the creative expression of the New England school, was modified both in practice and prestige. Though Robinson acknowledged an indebtedness to Crabbe and learned from Browning the incisive portraiture of the monologue, though Anna Hempstead Branch was influenced by the swift impulsive harmonies of Swinburne, the spirit of their imaginations caressed the groping freedom awakening in American life and experience. Indeed, the influence of contemporary French poets—Paul Fort, Henri de Régnier, Francis Jammes, and Paul Claudel—was stronger in the early years of the revival than the Edwardian and early Georgian poets of England. The Irish poets of the Celtic revival—Lionel Johnson, Æ, Eva Gore-Booth, and Yeats—touched more glamorously the sensibilities of the American poetic imagination than the English. Mrs. Alice Green had shown in her book, *An Old Irish World*, that the literary and aesthetic culture of Europe, particularly Greece and France, came more directly to Ireland than to Eng-

land. In America modern European literature, especially poetry and drama, was introduced in the pages of *Poet Lore*, that esoteric periodical established by Helen Clarke and Charlotte Porter and published in Boston from the 1880's to the end of the first decade of this century.

There is an historical pattern to be traced before mentioning the decadence of New England in letters. Hartford, Philadelphia and New York had preceded Boston as the literary capital of America. Boston's reign was longer than any of its predecessors before the twentieth century began. Its decline began in the 1890's and is accounted for by Van Wyck Brooks in his mellow and admirable study, *New England: Indian Summer*. At the beginning of this century, any treatment of New England life and character, no matter how skillful, whether in prose or verse, was shunned by the New York magazine editors and publishers. The defense of this attitude was that her novelists and poets had consumed the essence of the life and character of the Puritan States. Yet out of these ashes of decadence, Phoenix-like, was to arise a new birth of poetry personified by two of the foremost of American poets, Robert Frost and Edwin Arlington Robinson. Anna Hempstead Branch added a lustre to the brightening new dawn of New England letters, and Edna St. Vincent Millay came with a sunrise flame to symbolize in the title of her first notable poem, "Renasceance," what had taken place in New England.

I spoke earlier of the revolt against tradition and the tyranny of prescribed emotion and craft in which most of the outstanding poets of the period participated—Frost, Robinson, Aiken, Amy Lowell, Sand-

burg, Masters, Stevens, to take them at random. There was another revolt of a national rather than personal significance. This was the revolt of the West against the East under the leadership of Harriet Monroe and her associates in the Chicago magazine, *Poetry, a Magazine of Verse*. They felt that the supremacy of the "effete" East in poetic matters had to be challenged and overthrown because, to them, it no longer had the vitality nor the insight to express and celebrate American life and character. The peculiar paradox of Miss Monroe's attitude was that in renouncing Eastern American standards, intellectually and emotionally, she leaped beyond the Eastern seaboard to Europe with its older civilization and more hardened traditions for fresh materials and brighter craftsmanship—engaging Ezra Pound to scout Europe for them. Were Provence and the Lombard plains and the Gloucestershire farms more realistic and pregnant with inspiration than the New Hampshire hills or the valleys nestling along the Connecticut River? Out of this delusion she created the "New Poetry" which would have left her stranded on the shifting sand-bar of criticism had not the new poets of the West—Sandburg, Lindsay, and Sherwood Anderson with his "Mid-Western Chants"—come along to rescue her with a helping hand from Frost, Robinson, Archibald MacLeish, Conrad Aiken, Amy Lowell, John Crowe Ransom, and other Eastern poets.

This fallaciously called "New Poetry" won converts among the Eastern critics. A number of poets who had embraced the "social conscience" ideal of Walt Whitman's faith in the democratic concept were conditioned for the conviction that a "New Poetry" had

come into existence. It never occurred to them that poetry, like hunger and thirst, pain and joy, was co-created with the world, that it was the same element in the vision of the prophets of the Old Testament as it was in Virgil, guiding Dante through Purgatory to Paradise, or in Blake building his symbolism of the redemptive mythology—and no different a thing in Frost or Robinson or Masters, in Stephen Benét, Wallace Stevens, in Sara Teasdale or Elinor Wylie. These "New Poetry" advocates had mistaken their own spiritual, mental and emotional responses which time, conditions, experience and aspiration had changed for a changing world of growth and ideals and relationships.

The greater mistake they made was to confuse 'verse,' which is the verbal craft, the most appealing medium through which the spirit of poetry manifests itself, with technique. Here again they failed to recognize that verse had been a multiple and changing structure of accentual emphasis and syllabic arrangement, changing and standardizing throughout the centuries since man began practicing the art. Poetry began manifesting itself in folk-speech in the Teutonic, Norse, and Anglo-Saxon worlds, from which we take our inheritance, in the ballads celebrating the feats of heroes, the conflicts of rival tribal chieftains, and of love, generally in its tragic aspects, and so remained within this scope and temper until the Renaissance, with its transfusion of classicism, gave to the northern art the incentive to cultivate and conventionalize patterns of verse. These conventionalized patterns have been varying in design and changing in unity ever since.

An illustration of this development may be noted,

especially in English verse, in the treatment of blank verse and the heroic couplet. The Miltonic inversions which influenced the young Keats were discarded as he matured. In that maturing he discovered the fallacy of the reign of Boileau, the 'Lawgiver of Parnassus,' over the writing of the heroic couplet for which he established the canon, dominating the poets of both France and England through the last half of the seventeenth and throughout the eighteenth centuries. Keats liberated the poets from Boileau's prescription for the heroic couplet, but in doing so he did not create a "new poetry." He created a new technique of *verse*, which gave a more flexible and appealing medium, also a more beautiful variety of expression for the spirit of poetry. Of this confusion of terms the apostles of the "new poetry" during the first decade or two of the revival were unaware.

In addition, these first decades were concerned with two other moods and modes of practice, the first very positive in its rendering and the second in its proselytizing. John Donne had been rediscovered by the critical historians and began for the first time to influence American poets; and Gerard Manly Hopkins, chiefly through Catholic critics and readers, became known for the first time in America. Early in the century George Saintsbury had made a large collection of Caroline poets, and suddenly some of our younger poets became fascinated and influenced by the Metaphysical School of English poets. Their charm and subtle quality of mood and temper were often difficult to define as they merged their abstractions and elemental magnetism with the American mind and spirit. Thus the influence and its embodiment in avowed

conformity to the principles of the Metaphysicals were challenged by certain critics. It was the women poets, through some strange sympathy or affinity, rather than the men, who were drawn to the principles and art of the Metaphysicals. Léonie Adams and Elinor Wylie were the most prominent of these.

Then there were the Imagists, with a mode of versification imported by Amy Lowell. Under her blatant leadership they set the critical fraternity on its ears for a few years. She had gotten the concept and principles of practice from Ezra Pound and appropriated what significance the innovation had to her own advantage. She told me once that Pound had devised a rather ambitious plan for the promotion of the new school and offered her the honor of financing it, which she rejected because "nobody was to tell me how to spend my own money."

Free verse was the technical standard of this school. But free verse was nothing new in English poetry, and it was not a standard under which she could herd the band of faithful into battle and contend successfully with the opposition. She preferred the designation *vers librist* bestowed upon a group of French poets who at the time were making quite a stir for their innovations in measures and their literality in transferring the images of natural objects into verse. In the initial volume of the three Imagist Anthologies which Miss Lowell edited she proclaimed the Credo for the school, summarizing the principles of the Imagist; the first of importance was the prohibition of 'sentiment', which left man without one of the most potent and colorful of his emotions. (Miss Lowell was one of the most sentimental of beings herself. I have seen her burst into

tears on the instant of some slight or opposition and follow them almost immediately with an outbreak of stormy invective). Another principle, equally, if not more important, was the reproduction of the image with a 'hard' definite outline of shape and its contents. There must be no blurring of either. Pater's gemlike precision of reproduction must obtain at all times. The poet must not have an impression of things but must make a realistic reproduction of them. The poet based the articulation of his poem not on metre and the rhythms it produces but upon cadence; and the hidden music of the cadence should determine the turn of the rhymeless lines, short or long. Miss Lowell learned a good deal in developing her technique for free verse from music—the compositions of modern European composers. When the new work by the most advanced of them was imported by Carl Fischer, the Boston music dealer and publisher, a member of the firm would take it out to her home, even before it was available to the public, and play it for her, interpreting and analyzing, as he played, the concept and technique of the piece. She learned much from the music of the modern European composers which she used in her verse. Her greatest indebtedness, as she once confided to me, was to Stravinsky.

The Imagists were severely attacked by the critics, the most searing barbs coming from critics who were also poets. They were also ridiculed by John Livingston Lowes in an article in *The Nation*, written while he was on the faculty of Washington University in St. Louis, prior to his joining the Harvard faculty. He took some paragraphs from a George Meredith novel and rearranged sentences in conformity with the

Imagist formula to prove that the latter's whole theory of content and technique was arbitrary and had no relationship to a sound aesthetic concept. Yet later on, Glenn Hughes of the University of Oregon published a book to prove the validity of the Imagist doctrine.

It cannot be denied that the impact of Amy Lowell upon the period from 1915 to 1925, the year of her death, was greater and more contagious than any of the contemporaneous poets. It was due largely to her personality, to her membership in a notable and wealthy New England family; one brother, Abbott Lawrence Lowell, was President of Harvard University and another, Percy Lowell, a famed astronomer, who computed the existence of the planet Pluto by the gravitational interaction of other heavenly bodies, which was confirmed by its appearance after his death. Her life has not been fully and convincingly told. S. Foster Damon's biography contained many lapses and misrepresentations, especially between the publication of her second book of verse, *A Dome of Many-Colored Glass*, in 1912 (she had privately published a small collection of verse when in her early twenties) and her prose studies, *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry*, of a selected number of representative poets who were her contemporaries, in 1917. Horace Gregory's recently published *Amy Lowell, Portrait of a Poet in Her Time*, lacks those finishing touches which transform a sketch from its vague and indeterminate limning to complete portraiture. He is more exact in his title than his text, for the times belonged to Amy Lowell; she did not belong to them. She was resourceful and never lacked a reservoir of intentions and materials to sustain her grasp upon the literary

world. "Every poet," she once remarked, "comes to the end of his creative power, some earlier, some later, and then begins to repeat himself, and against the coming of such a time I am cultivating the art of criticism." She knew the limitations and uncertain vitality of this creative power in herself, and ere the Imagist doctrine began to wither, she was experimenting with "polyphonic prose," which Clement Wood claimed to have introduced. With this hybrid form of imaginative expression she was in her best element as an artist, for the essential nature and purpose of the form was to embody a narrative, and Amy Lowell was primarily a story-teller. It gave her scope for that objectivity she could not exercise to the full in the countless other poems in the large body of her work that demanded sympathy and compassion for human frailties. In my opinion then, *Can Grande's Castle* was the greatest of her volumes, containing those two superb pieces, "Sea Blue and Blood Red," and "Guns as Keys: and the Great Gate Swings," the former telling the story of Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton and the latter the opening of Japan by Commodore Perry. In these polyphonic pieces were color and movement, the pathetic poignancy of love, and the heroic adventure of American naval might opening up the realm of an ancient and mysterious Eastern nation to Western civilization.

Death closed her career with the crowning achievement of the Keats biography, which was also a challenge, as all her work had been, and inspired by the love she had for the tragic young English poet, a love whose overflow of intensity she bestowed upon her shepherd dogs and her gardens. Her challenge in the life of Keats was to supplant Sir Sidney Colvin's biog-

raphy as the authoritative life, and it was in the critical interpretation of Keats' poetry that she hoped to achieve it.

As Amy Lowell was a phenomenon in the poetic history of America during the first two decades of the century, there was another phenomenon of creative unresponsiveness on the part of the poets of this period which for quite a while puzzled me. There broke upon them, as it broke upon a startled world, the First World War. When it broke, Lord Grey, the English Secretary for Foreign Affairs, looked toward the Continent and declared, "The lights are going out in Europe." Woodrow Wilson led America into the gigantic conflict on foreign soil "To make the world safe for Democracy" and restore those lights which had faded out. But the American poets did little to inspire and support the effort. The denizens of Tin Pan Alley were far more vocal and persuasive in maintaining the morale of the soldiers at the front, and stiffening the spirit of sacrifice at home. The stupendous battles of the war, in which poison gas and flame-throwers were for the first time used in warfare, transcended all but a few engagements in the Second World War—the Anzio Beachhead, the break-through at St. Loo, and the Battle of the Bulge. The battle of the Somme, of Passchendaele Ridge, the prolonged agony of Verdun, the fiasco at Gallipoli, Hindenburg's slaughter of the Russians in the Mauseurian marshes, the Russians' attempted crossing of the Carpathian Mountains, and the final turning of the Siegfried Line by the Americans in the Argonne, the Italian defeat at Caporetto and retreat across the Piave were all epic encounters which had not been matched outside our own Civil

War. The English poets responded to the terrible and critical slaughter taking place, for it not only touched them in person but their homeland was both scarred and threatened with invasion. Siegfried Sassoon, Charles Sorley, Robert Nichols, Rupert Brooke, any many other English poets were maimed by the terrible new engines devised for modern warfare, and suffered excruciating physical anguish in the bitter winter cold of the trenches. To realize how awful was this latter, one has only to read the letters of Dr. John McCrae, the author of that imperishable lyric, "In Flanders Fields." Perhaps the most notable American poem inspired by the War, though it had to do with the dislocation of war as an anachronism in modern civilization, is Lincoln's Colcord's "Vision of War," which I dare say is unknown to contemporary readers. These English poets endured all this for the sake of patriotism as a safeguard to their tight little isle, but at the same time cursed with a vehemence the folly of war. The puzzlement why our poets of this warring period failed to produce any significant war poetry vanished when I realized the soil of America had not been blood-soaked and ravished by it. Our Civil War had produced a great deal of memorable poetry, and the reason is now easily understood. "Home" had been ravished and its soil blood-soaked from battle; and that was as true of Confederate Virginia as it was of Union Pennsylvania.

I have dealt so far in this Introduction with the great period of revival in American poetry which was paralleled by the seventeen previously published Anthologies from 1913 to 1929. Margaret Haley Carpenter, as my co-worker in this publication, and

working in sympathy and agreement, is responsible for the selection of poems from those previous seventeen volumes which make up the second section of this book. With sure taste and critical judgment she has compiled what we like to call an *Anthology of Anthologies*, which is superlatively the most representative collection of the period. In addition to the selecting of the poems she had to contend with many perplexing copyright problems, which she solved in the negotiations with the poets, and where deceased, with their heirs and executors, and with publishers, for copyright permissions, with understanding and their good will. However, it must be added here that a few excellent and representative authors and poems have had to be omitted, reluctantly on our part, because of the restrictions surrounding their publication.

I remember the many times during the spring and early summer of 1930, I would awaken in the morning with the pressure on the half-conscious mind of the poems I would have to read and grade during the day. I received about three hundred publications monthly, newspapers as well as magazines, and these I began reading and checking during the winter months with the accumulated stacks from the previous August—when the Anthology year began—so by the time May and June came around I was just catching up with the current issues. In addition there were the scores of books of poems, and books about poets and poetry. I had as well my space to fill with reviews and articles in the Wednesday and Saturday editions of the *Transcript*, which consumed several thousand words a week. These writings do not take into account the two or three books, chief among them the *History of*

the Great War, designed for younger readers.

I had a method of reading and grading the magazine poems that I believed efficient then, and I still do. I read a poem and checked it according to the spontaneous impression it made upon me, and as I reacted to this impression. I obliterated in the reading the author's name and therefore was not influenced in checking the poem for rejection or for re-consideration. There was a second stage of analysis to uncover the author's intentions, which cover a wide area of moods and inspiration; and lastly, a third stage to determine the adequacy of his craft, the resources of techniques at his command to communicate in a unified pattern the degree of excellence and conviction of the communication. Rules by which the art had been governed or practiced I disregarded as far as they related to any particular poem, but I insisted that the poem adhere to the standards established by aesthetic requirements, not any particular standard, but that evolving from the psychological, emotional, or intellectual nature inherent in the individual; standards which in their over-all significance made intelligible to the reader while co-ordinating the processes which seek to reveal Truth, manifest Beauty, patterning those consolations man is in need of to sustain his spiritual life.

During seventeen years I was immersed in the labor of selecting from the thousands and thousands of poems those I thought, in accordance with the methods and tests above stated, the best to make the seventeen volumes of the Anthologies. Then of a sudden circumstances forced me to abandon the work I had loved for so long. As I said at the beginning, those

mornings of May and early June of 1930, I would awaken with the pressure of the day's work that had to be done on the Anthology, and it would take me some time to realize I was free of the beloved grind and I became lost in a kind of sadness that even the freedom could not assuage. I had lost something I could not recapture, and was a stranger in a world of familiar things and duties.

And now after thirty years of a kind of unnatural sleep in life I awaken to another dawn of natural affinity with the art, to cherish the old magic of friendships with the poets who have survived the years with me, and to encounter the new and younger singers whom I trust I still have the power to serve, and to remember with gratitude, affection and admiration, the host of those with whom I can no longer talk nor enjoy their companionship, but live and be inspired by the rich legacy, as the world must, of the poetry they bequeathed us who love the art.

How compare the present group of poets with the group that made the renaissance period? First in numbers and techniques, in the quality and degrees of imagination, in the visions that are evoked and embodied in the verbal patterns of music and imagery? It is a far more difficult task to perform with our American poets than it would be between, say, the Elizabethans and Carolinians or the Augustans and the English Romantics; but comparable to the integrating influences of the Romantics and the Victorians. There was a kinship between the two latter groups, for the greater of the Victorians—Tennyson, Browning, Swinburne, Rossetti, Morris and Matthew Arnold—were fathered by Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley,

Coleridge and Landor. Both passion and restraint of spiritual excesses were nicely balanced as the Victorians matured, aided by the conscious pessimism of James Thomson (BV), the philosophical doubt of Arthur Hugh Clough, and the gentle and gracious transitoriness of life in Fitzgerald's translation of *The Rubáiyát*. It was only when the Victorians came of age they asserted their independence and propagated the arrogance of national power co-existing with a prideful domestic morality that the age became indelibly stamped with the stigma of the good Queen's name.

Does something of the same relationship exist between the renaissance group and our present-day poets? Or are the present poets but carrying on the tradition and character of the poets who overthrew the Puritan or New England dominance? In one sense it is hard to say because many of the poets who gave a lustre to the earlier period are still living and writing—Frost, Marianne Moore, Robinson Jeffers, Witter Bynner, William Carlos Williams, Eli Siegel, Joseph Auslander, John Crowe Ransom, E. E. Cummings, Archibald MacLeish, and if America still wants to claim the genius of the expatriate, T. S. Eliot. With the exception of Frost, Eliot, Cummings and Miss Moore, I do not think any of these surviving poets have deeply affected the younger poets of today.

There is an important factor in the history of our poetry since its revival at the end of the second decade of the century which I have hitherto failed to mention: this is the rediscovery of Emily Dickinson in 1912. Shortly after her death in 1880, an edition of her poems was edited and published by Mabel Loomis Todd, and being a posthumous book it was also the first pub-

lished collection of her poems. For thirty years this was an unwanted book of poems on the counters of second-hand bookstores. In 1912, Madame Bianchi, Emily Dickinson's niece, published a moderate collection of her poems entitled *The Single Hound*. It was one of those strange conjunctions, which happen in the literary and artistic world, as they happen in the physical world, that the appearance of *The Single Hound* should coincide with the birth of the new era in American poetry. Here indeed, was a paradox in American letters, where a poet long dead was re-discovered during the gestatory period of a new era, and with the genius to revivify the poetic imagination. She was the progenitor by nearly two generations of the New England poetic genius in Frost and Robinson that restored the prestige of New England in the poetic art.

The American Parnassus seemed overcrowded during the twenty years following 1912. One wanted to cry with Alexander Pope in his "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot" that "all bedlam had broken out." Where once the Parnassian citizens were huddled on the pre-empted territory of New England with some emigrées to New York and a solitary pioneer here and there in other parts of this vast country—James Whitcomb Riley and Eugene Field in the Midwest, Frank L. Stanton, Cale Young Rice and Madison Cawein, and Sidney Lanier, in the South, and along the Pacific Coast, Edward Rowland Sill, Joaquin Miller and Charles Erskine Scott Wood,—now there were everywhere indigenous groups of poets characterized by their localities, Charleston, Norfolk, Nashville, Philadelphia, Chicago, cities in Kansas, Iowa, Colorado,

from Texas in the South and up through California to Oregon and Washington in the North. Poetry magazines began to spring up like mushrooms, and local poetry societies were established in association with the parent Poetry Society of America. If England was a nest of singing birds, America had become a forest of them.

How was it when I came back after thirty years absence from the forest? There was a deep enchantment for the critics in the earlier period who went a-hunting in these woods for new tunes and variations of music, for the sight of a more colorful verbal imagery. They had heard the early songs of Frost and Robinson, of Edna Millay and Sara Teasdale, of Wallace Stevens and Vachel Lindsay, of Witter Bynner and the recovered verse of Emily Dickinson, and proclaimed in the ecstatic apostrophe of Keats that poetry, like the nightingale, "was not born for death, immortal bird."

If numbers are any proof, poetry is not dead in America today. There is an interesting note in the *Atlantic Monthly* for August 1957, announcing its intention to publish semi-annually a group of poems by new poets, in its August and February issues. It declared that "At no time in our past has the *Atlantic* received as many poems as are now submitted to us. They are evidence of an interest in poetry which never slackens and which often burns most brightly in the undergraduate years. As an incentive for writers yet unestablished, we have set aside each year a number of pages to be devoted to the work of young poets in our February and August issues." That, indeed, is a wonderful gesture of faith and encouragement which other magazines might do well to follow, for it not

only gives encouragement to the young poets but stimulates an appreciation for the art in these days of popular distractions and mass communication. It is true that today poetry participates on programs and in functions that were not common to it in the earlier period, but even so the audiences are small compared to other forms of cultural and artistic offerings, and it gets but a tithe of their publicity since, except on rare occasions, it lacks "news value." Poetry contends today with the media of mass communication which in my opinion is not so serious an obstacle to the creation of poetry itself as it is to the knowledge and appreciation of poetry by the masses. Time was when poetry depended upon oral declamation and its circulation by scholars and diplomats who brought the scroll and copies of manuscript from one country to another, or as in England from one palace or manor-house to another; thus Sir Thomas Wyatt brought the sonnet from Italy to England, and so, much of the loveliest lyric poetry of the early sixteenth century as we know it in the Elizabethan Song-Books and the *Speculum Amantis* was circulated. Yet poets continuously created new and more poems, formulating new techniques, devising new variations of metrical measures, patterning new rhyme-schemes, establishing new standards and traditions which scholars passed on from one generation to another. We owe more to the system of patronage to the poet, indeed to all artists, by the royal courts and the nobility, than we are now willing to admit or appreciate, for there was scanty support from the public. Note that pitiful urgency of Erasmus to his friend James Batt to tell the "white lie" to the Lady of Veere, so a few more gold coins be

squeezed from her to enable him to purify the text of St. Jerome. This reliance of the artist upon the patron was nullified with the rise and development of democratic institutions, but without it the creative culture of the West would have been seriously delayed in development. Today we depend upon the responsive appreciation of what we like to believe is a literate and idealistic public mind and spirit, which more often turns its attention and shares its purse with Mr. Seldes' *Seven Lively Arts*. Yet the old idea of patronage still exists, if not in the single, with the collective, individual. For without Foundations such as the Guggenheim, the Rockefeller, the Ford and the Hartford, and a number of smaller ones, creators in the Fine Arts would lack opportunity and encouragement; then, indeed, their genius would die.

We are reminded of a fountain-head of patronage working in behalf of the growth and sustenance of the American poetic art and the poets who create it, when we realize the existence of the American Academy of Poets. To one woman of profound dedication and indomitable courage we owe its origin and continuing growth through a quarter of a century. She is Mrs. Hugh Bullock, about whom I quote the following paragraph from the folder issued by the Academy, "When, after her marriage, Mrs. Hugh Bullock came to live in this country, she was deeply concerned that Americans did not seem to appreciate their poets. Born in France and living mostly in Europe, she was imbued with the European's respect for the poet as the man of genius who frequently points the way to better social concepts and higher ideals for the future.

"At Columbia University, in Joseph Auslander's

graduate poetry class, her concern was deepened, as she learned how difficult it was for a poet to gain recognition in this country, and how, with a few exceptions, poets faced chronic financial crises.

"Determined to help poetry to come into its own in America, Mrs. Bullock, after conferring with numerous acquaintances in business and the professions, as well as with a number of poets, including Louis Ledoux and Edwin Arlington Robinson, conceived the project of The Academy of American Poets." The Academy reaches the twenty-fifth anniversary of its foundation in 1959, and should be acclaimed with a national celebration comparable to any event that has given us cause for pride in our national culture. Its annual Fellowship Awards of \$5,000, over the past ten or twelve years, to eminent poets, transcend in significance anything that has been done in recognition of the creative artist in America. Indeed, it is on a comparable level in American literature with the Nobel Prize for world literature. There have been some thirteen recipients of the Fellowship Awards from Edwin Markham in 1937 to Robinson Jeffers in 1958.

In honor of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the founding of the Academy of American Poets, a Presidential Proclamation designating a week in the spring for a national celebration should be made.

There used to be a phenomenon known as the literary statesman. We would wish that one is with us today in the person of Senator John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts, whose book, *Profiles of Courage*, has made such a profound impression upon the reading public. Would he himself be a profile of courage, of

spiritual as well as political courage, and speak in the Senate of the Twenty-Fifth Anniversary event of the Academy of American Poets? His eloquence in expounding upon such items of vital concern to our nation as armaments, rights of labor, foreign aid, etc., would be of inestimable value in preserving the idealism of his nation's poets in whom is the inspiration to lead the people out of the confused and threatening dilemmas that confront them in this nuclear age. The people seek a vision in a new world, a world remade by science, the shrinkage of distance, and instantaneous communications—of the conflicts of nationalistic aspirations and ideologies, of the mutuality of aid and good will, in the common hope and struggle for peace, upon which is based man's physical conquest and rightful use of the illimitable energy and knowledge and complexities of outer space. "Without a vision the people perish," declared St. Paul. And it is to the poets that the people turn for this vision, just as Judea turned to its Prophets who were mighty and foreseeing poets, as Greece turned to its great dramatists of human fate, as Italy to Dante and Leopardi, and as England to Chaucer, Wordsworth and Tennyson. Those who read, with care and insight, Robert Frost's poem "Kitty Hawk" in this volume, will know what is the mission of the poet; for the scope of this poem illuminates the spirit of man in its conquest not only of the physical world but of the spiritual.

It is hoped that America will take time out from her mighty industrial activities to pay homage to this institution on its anniversary, which has nourished the vision of the nation's poets, without which the temper and substance of the nation's material might could

well be drained of meaning and purpose.

The gathering of the poems for this 1958 Anthology has revealed many contrasts in techniques and subjects compared to those which I gathered for the last volume in 1929. I admit it is a different world in which the poets live and sing today than it was in the thirties. It may be a different world, but the springs of emotion and imagination run from the same sources of poetic creativeness that poured out of the heart and mind of man ever since Eve's plaintive admission that "The serpent did tempt me." I have found many things in the current poetic practice of our poets that arouse great interest and many questions. What has become of the narrative and the intense mood of the lyric? The 1912-30 period was rich in narrative verse. Frost with his "Death of the Hired Man," "A Hundred Collars" and "Nausicaä"; Robinson with a whole string of them from "Captain Craig," the series of Arthurian narratives from "Merlin" through "Lancelot" to "Tristram," the many non-Arthurian tales bracketed between "The Man Who Died Twice" and "King Jasper"; Masters' "Domesday"; the superb narrative performance of Stephen Vincent Benét's "John Brown's Body"; the glowing richness of Robinson Jeffers' "The Faithless Shepherdess," Robert Hillyer's "Carmus," Conrad Aiken's "The Jig of Forslin," Archibald MacLeish's "Conquistadore" (a Pulitzer Prize winner), and John G. Neihardt's dramatic, epical adventure of Western pioneering, "The Song of Hugh Glass," and Dave Biernet's half cynical pathos in the tale of "Gayheart." These are but a few of the many narratives that enriched the poetry of the Renaissance period, carrying on in English the tradition of Scott,

Byron, Tennyson and Browning in England, and of Longfellow, Whittier, Joaquin Miller, and Sidney Lanier, in America. This continuing practice of the narrative which came to such an abrupt end after the 1930's demanded a vitality from which the impinging forces of change—in communications, the acceleration of travel, of push-button conveniences, the tremendous expansion of transportation by motor car and plane, and the multiform facilities for entertainment, radio, television and the theatre—have drained and distracted. Many poets turned to prose fiction as a more accessible and more understandable medium for weaving their stories of human life and experience. Many of our successful novelists began their careers in poetry: MacKinlay Kantor, the late Hervey Allen, William Faulkner, Jesse Stuart, Vardis Fisher, Alexander Laing, Paul Hogan, and the late Willa Cather.

The year, however, has not been wholly lacking in sustained work, the most notable being Winfield Townley Scott's narrative of "The Dark Sister" (Lief Ericson's sister), which tells of her tragic experiences in voyaging to the new world and the return home. Another work of sustained vitality, though cast in the dramatic mold, is Archibald MacLeish's *J. B.* Mr. Ciardi calls it the 'Birth of a Classic,' and bases his judgment, I believe, not so much upon its form as on the creation of a new kind of speech, a new and subtle language to express the hidden auguries of a profound complex of emotions contending with the objective realities of life and experience. Is it an example of what T. S. Eliot contrived in the genre of *The Wasteland* or better still in his *Murder in the Cathedral* and *The Cocktail Party*?

The lyric, too, has taken a sea-change. It is no longer the embodiment of an intensified mood spontaneously revealed in the melodious simplicities of speech; that idea of Arthur Symons used in explaining the Elizabethans that "The age was one when verse was used as speech, and becomes song by the way of speech." With our current poets the lyric impulse is there but becomes adulterated with an excess of intellectuality before it can manifest itself in the image or metaphor of joy or beauty, hope or aspiration. The contemporary American lyric is too laden with what I like to call an inner ornateness of subtle abstractions. I confess it has given a new kind of beauty to poetry. There comes to the surface a pattern that is both intriguing and enchanting. It really is a new kind of art that had its inception with Elizabeth Bishop, though she reflects the internal awareness of Marianne Moore to the nuances and fleeting symbols of vision. Richard Wilbur, Delmore Schwartz, Richard Eberhart, and Donald Hall, in the poems representing them in this volume, attest to the possession of this special kind of magic.

The current poets do not seem to be attracted to Nature as formerly the American poets have been. I do not mean the visual aspects of Nature as she is encountered in the natural world, but the real spirit of Nature which operates the visible objects with which we are familiar and that make up the background of our existence, objects that are terrifying and entrancing, various in color and form, changeable in motion and eternal in the stability of substance. The spirit that Thoreau was familiar with, and Richard Jefferies in a mystical way, Professor Woodbridge tells us in his

remarkable "Essay on Nature," determines our success in accordance to the degree we collaborate with this spirit. Yes, the poets still note the seasons and their changes: what the spring produces of flowers, their colors, delicate designs of petal and leaf and sweet scents, and the winter of ice, brisk winds and snow and barren vegetation, but are less concerned with the hidden and mysterious energies that link the farthest star with the closest bit of earthly landscape. The enigma is that the contemporary poet is no longer attracted by that natural magic which is the pathway of the imagination to the disembodied realities of creation—that "awful, unseen power," which Shelley surmised was in control of Intellectual Beauty. Can we account for this lack of nature interest by our contemporary poets to urbanization of living? The modern urban community is such an amazing composition of huge structures with every utility for comforts and efficiency, the streets reverberating daylong with the traffic of motor cars and buses, and under them a network of subway lines with trains roaring through the tunneled earth—the city a conglomerate mass of stone and steel and electricity, nature refined and reduced to the sterile bondage of man's economy. Nature has her revenge, of which the generality of mankind is not aware, as it is hypothesized by Algernon Blackwood in his marvelous stories of identification and reunion between man's and nature's spirit, in *Pan's Garden*. Emily Dickinson had this mystical sense of reunion when she told Col. Higginson that her "business was with circumference." There is a young, unknown poet, who I think has it too. She is Sally Appleton, and there are four of her poems in

this book. When she begins one of them with this line, "The complicated body," there is the tone of the thought and feeling of that strange wizard of Amherst. If the rest of her poems echo the strains of the Amherst recluse, no other that I know has been able to capture them, as the wooded valley may capture the distant sound of the surf beating upon the shore. I marvel at the phrases this young woman has woven into her poem, "To St. John the Evangelist." For example this:

His was a book to eat,
Bitter for his bowels,
Honey for his tongue;

Another poet who impressed me with a sensibility akin to Emily Dickinson and Sally Appleton, is Lawrence Lipton. In his poem, "The Questioner," he replaces the swiftness of Francis Thompson's hound with the stealth of the cat in tracking down the answer he seeks.

As we read Mr. Lipton's poem, we note him questioning the Innocence of Eden, the "lily bell and leaf" of the spring's first green, then being "subsumed" in the hollow of God's hand, where he sees

Death agony of tooth and claw
Murder stalking night and day
Within the shadow of a grain of sand

then to the sea, [Mother of man's origin, O Thallus! Thallus!] he goes to fling his riddle at her whom he loves so well, and hoping for the answer while making

the "cavern of her arm his home." What the sea answered or did not answer, surprised him with a "nameless fear"; as he read, what was written in the "lost, open books" made him draw back and "know at last I did not want to know." There is magic in this poem of man's insatiable thirst for the knowledge of his destiny, which Lilith Lorraine epitomizes in her poem, "Naked They Shall Return," and which by the accident of alphabetical arrangement of authors follows Mr. Lipton's, when she sings of

A Voice proclaiming from an open portal,
"Divine rebellion was divinely planned."

I have found the sense of inscrutable destiny the concern of a number of poems included in this book. It touches with alternate light and shadow the visions in Margaret Haley Carpenter's poems. Here is a poet with more nostalgic memories binding the past and present than is to be encountered elsewhere in current American poetry.

Chromatic tones of richness changing there,
Resolving even then to memory—

she sings in the pensive mood of "September Afternoon," a lovely poem that gathers its significance in this compelling realization of human experience:

"This is the way all lovely things must go,
Leaving behind the substance of a dream."

It is with retention and preservation of that 'substance'

that one holds the key to the realities that either strengthen or weaken our spiritual faiths and hopes. In the more abstract qualities of her sonnets, "Imminent Harvest," there is, nevertheless, a symbolic re-affirmation of this predestined flowering of wisdom in the "hand of grief,"—a wisdom, a knowledge age cannot teach—

Only one teacher in his careful way
Instructs with patience how these lessons go,
At his own will, upon his chosen day.

Again that idea of the "substance of a dream" is repeated.

How infinitely beautiful and rare
And near to us remain the things that end;
How memory's frail substance may decree
What shall be touched with immortality.

This quiet, unobtrusive sense of destiny pervades these sonnets which have captured the responsive appreciation of critics, for they won a joint first prize bestowed by the Poetry Society of America in competition for the Arthur Davison Ficke Memorial Award, and also the Greenwood Prize awarded by the Poetry Society of England.

Miss Carpenter's two lyrics, "Postscript" and "Second Sitting," are subtly and spontaneously spun. The first deals with the bitter remembrance of love, wherein the sweet fruits of its early joy become the bitter fruits of joy's remembrance; if the idea is not original, the treatment is, and that's what makes po-

etry the fresh emotional re-creation of experiences. The "Second Sitting" is too subtly psychological for interpretation, this made no easier by the clashing brilliance of articles in the studio—the impartial clarity of northern light on floor and door and striking a brilliance on the sitter's gown where "pools of crimson velvet stain the floor." The unspoken thoughts of the sitter as the poet transcribes them, declare:

Nothing has changed the texture of this hush,
Or altered any shadow in this place;
And in remembered way, you lift the brush,
Touch rainbow palette briefly, start to trace,
Completely unaware, a stranger's face:
A stranger's eyes you have not seen before.

These two lyrics, "Postscript" and "Second Sitting," are evoked from the moods of a blind alchemy in human experience, tenuously but vibrantly as an echo. In the sonnet "The Last Lover," Miss Carpenter has written one of the best sonnets in current poetry, in which she transfigures death with the most glamorous attribute of human experience; and with a touch of the nervous symbolism reminiscent of the Elizabethans who gave to gloomy and menacing themes the glow of beauty.

Miss Carpenter is the author of a biography of Sara Teasdale. Her verse has been translated into Spanish.

Poetry is a coat of many colors and its wearer possesses a face of many expressions and inscrutabilities, but penetrate to the throbbing heart that animates both coat and face and you discover the common blood-stream of humanity. How this beats and flows

in temperature and measure is not always understood unless one possesses the divinations of catholicity and sympathy. These are demanded of everyone who would appreciate and understand the poetry of William Carlos Williams. He breaks every canon of traditional verse, repudiates the systems of metrical inventions and every form and design of verse-pattern, yet he comes up with an overflowing tide of truths and meanings of the human drama. In his wisdom he knows that man cannot confront life in its entirety and keep his sanity, a fact that Robinson acknowledges when in one of his poems he asserts that if man knew beforehand the tragic complexions of life,

Not one man in five
Would care to stay alive.

It's the same idea in a sonnet of George Meredith's which he climaxes with that accusingly dramatic exclamation of "God wot!"

William Carlos Williams never subjects his spirit to a fate beyond man's own experience. Much is said and written about man's possession of a free will and Dr. Williams' concern is not so much whether man possesses one but how he uses it. His is that rare power of mind and spirit that sees life steadily and sees it whole. By so doing with encompassing imagination and purpose he breaks that "wholeness" into fragments so that man might fit them together again by the exertion of his Will and with the knowledge thus gained triumph over circumstances and fate. This is the miracle of man's success in life—a miracle that is not performed in heaven but on earth.

Through a series of five books with the symbolic key

of a city—Paterson, N. J.—he reveals his vision of the universality of human nature in conflict with itself for peace and happiness. *Paterson Five* has just been published. It contains a variety of “fragments” in prose and verse; and in calling them fragments I do not mean to imply they are the discarded remnants of a non-existing pattern of a philosophic unity, but as those broken arcs of which Browning sings. One of these fragments in the book, and which originally appeared in *The Nation* last summer, is a startling revelation of an idea that has escaped the most perceptive of poets—this is “A Brueghel Nativity.”

It is the most *human* celebration of that Divine Event. At last we have a Nativity poem to dethrone the long-standing supremacy of Milton's great “Ode” on the same subject. In Milton's “Ode” the treatment has the essence of paganism. It is a ceremonial such as the Greeks may have performed in supplication to the Oracles. All the glory is on the part of the Unseen and Unknown, while *humanity*, the beneficiary of the Divine Dispensation, is treated as the undeserved receiver of Mystical favors. What place and voice has man in the ranks of this host that Milton describes paying homage to the Babe?

At last surrounds their sight
A globe of circular light,
That with long beams the shamefaced night
array'd;
The helmed cherubim,
And sworded seraphim,
Are seen in glittering ranks with wings
display'd,

Harping, the loud and solemn quire,
With unexpressive notes, to Heaven's new-born
Heir.

This host of cherubim and seraphim vanish, to leave in the mind an impression of fantasy, an unreality that man cannot substantiate in the equation of his daily hopes and experiences. But how well does William Carlos Williams translate the scene and implications of Peter Brueghel's painting into a reality imbued with the conviction of a miracle which does not escape the memory of man's inheritance of the Divine. Birth is the creative process of that inheritance.

I shall quote some passages from Dr. Williams' poem to show how Peter Brueghel conceived the vision of the Nativity, and how Dr. Williams revealed it through the evocation of the poet. Never have painter and poet been so consummately wedded to the illumination of a subject or event.

—it is a scene, authentic
enough, to be witnessed frequently
among the poor (I salute
the man Brueghel who painted
what he saw—

many times no doubt
among his own kids but not of course
in this setting

The crowned and mitred heads
of the 3 men, one of them black,
who had come, obviously from afar

(highwaymen?)
by the rich robes
they had on—offered
to propitiate their gods

* * *

He painted
the bustle of the scene,
the unkempt straggling
hair of the old man in the
middle, his sagging lips

— —incredulous
that there was so much fuss
about such a simple thing as a baby
born to an old man
out of a girl and a pretty girl
at that

And in conclusion, these impressive lines:

—the soldiers' ragged clothes,
mouths open,
their knees and feet
broken from 30 years of
war, hard campaigns, their mouths
watering for the feast which
had been provided

Peter Brueghel the artist saw it
from the two sides: the
imagination must be served—
and he served

dispassionately

The italics are mine so that it might be emphasized that this poet saw the whole vision of the Nativity event which the painter had adumbrated, and not the partial vision that Milton saw.

Erasmus would have loved this poem, for in it he would have noted the *pure Christ* which he so constantly preached, and urged man to accept, cleared of the shadowings and misleading misconceptions with which the theologians surrounded Him, and which were often abetted by poets and painters alike in distorting His Being and His mission.

There are other poems in this '58 Anthology selected from the magazines which merit the admiration of the reader; Padraic Colum's "The Basket Maker," Helen Bevington's "The World is a Book," Witter Bynner's "Inscriptions on Chinese Paintings," Donald Hall's "Christmas Eve in Whitneyville, 1955," John Nixon, Jr.'s "Dining Room Furniture," Margaret Brewster Chard's "Night to Remember," Marianne Moore's "Melchoir Vulpius," Leah Bodine Drake's "The Hellenic World," David McCord's "Under the Zodiac," Katherine Garrison Chapin's "Young Singer in the Country," Richard Eberhart's "The Garden God," Betty Page Dabney's "Child with a Mirror," Delmore Schwartz's "At a Solemn Musick," Albert Herzing's "The Candy Man's Art is the Sweetest Art I Know," John Holmes' "Photograph of Robert Frost," Robert Hillyer's "A Ballade of Revelation," Daniel G. Hoffman's "The Hermit of Rosier," Margaret McGovern's "Faith of My Father" and John Frederick Nims' beautiful versions of a group of poems by the great mystic, St. John of the Cross.

I have already mentioned William Carlos Williams'

book, *Paterson Five*, a recent publication of great importance among the new books of poetry by poets represented in this Anthology. To it may be added Donald Hall's *The Dark Houses*, Sister M. Maura's *The Word is Love*, May Swenson's *A Cage of Spines*, John Ciardi's *I Marry You*, and the reissue of Eli Siegel's *Hot Afternoons Have Been in Montana* which after nearly thirty years receives the recognition that was due on its original publication as one of the greatest poems in modern American poetry.

I wish to thank, with deep appreciation, Mrs. Dorothy R. Homer, Administrative Librarian of the Countée Cullen Branch of the New York Public Library, and her assistants, Mrs. Alvista Perkins, Mrs. Elnora Jackson, and Mrs. Marie Nassberg, for their invaluable services in making available copies of magazines which were not obtainable elsewhere.

WILLIAM STANLEY BRAITHWAITE

New York
November 1958

ANTHOLOGY OF MAGAZINE VERSE
FOR 1958

A FAT MAN DIES

I heard a woman soft with fat
cry out she saw her husband dead,
that he had risen from his bed
a certain way, and, just like that,
had fallen, and when they lifted him
his limbs were lard, his heart a crumb.

I saw her, gentle and piteous,
whose fleshiness had melted his,
turn from her dream, and there upon
tomorrow's white and icy screen
he rose, he fell, he died the same
as in that most meticulous dream.

And now, her softness, large and giving,
yearned at his live obesity,
his kindness slow and darkly striving;
yet all her size could vainly do
was make his lips more certain gray;
with each caress his own fat grew;

till, sick, from their sad bed he rose,
and fell, and died as in her dream,—
with one thing added: he was so large
from life, from her, his burial mound,
big beyond custom, drew men's eyes
and gave them pause for miles around.

Saturday Review

George Abbe

TO TEACH

The students enter and sit in rows
Restlessly dead, hearts hidden
Behind fixed faces—but faces
So young and clean betray their dream,
Clearly not anticipated here.

I stand up before them, to begin—
No older, but younger, holding what's
To be known in hand, not knowing
Myself. Somehow the room survives,
The faces expand, some yawn.

And the hour rings, and they rise.
I am tired. The faces didn't show glory
Sitting there, but habit, breathing,
Care. They figured instead the next
Rows to sit, the next teacher to hear.

Yet I can't deny this new face
Mystery chooses to wear, its crew cut
And golden pin. Somewhere in things,
A shape transforms. I don't see it,
Won't know. But a thought grows wings,

Descends and announces to one—perhaps two,
We are the loved, tendered, we are the Kings.

The Catholic Worker

Sally Appleton

SINGING

Each gift has its particular pain,
As people define themselves in love
Or angels act each in a form above:
Light, strict, clear, telling and warm,
 In it our bodies are consumed;
Air, vague, moving, fertile and strong,
 It in us is borne, consumed and gone;
Earth, dark, thick, translated sun,
 It feeds, is fed by our flesh and bone;
Water, deep, wide, mark of time
 It is the oil of God to form our limbs—
These elements are the angels' shades,
 Are materials to suffer the mind.
As angels announce us thoughts of God,
So our matter tells that each act of love—
For our fingers, for our breasts and thighs,
With each individual pain—is singing
The glory of our lives, as we cry to be consumed
As light, air, earth and water are,
Yet blessing the gift of life that makes us sing.

The Commonweal

Sally Appleton

THE WORLD

The complicated body
In calm, lessens its pull
On the moon, permits the stars
To arrange themselves as before.

Eased back in the garden,
Silent save for cicadae
Rubbing their skins in the dark,
The body wonders with its parts:

A hand moves the bushes
And presses into the moss,
The back measures its history
Against the separate stones;

The feet turn up answer
To the air, while blood
Counts the time wonder
Has relaxed on the earth;

The head views its home
In the hand, the foot, and the spine,
Then lies back on the moss,
Singularly marked by a crown.

The Commonweal

Sally Appleton

TO ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST

He was not afraid
Of world convulsion, ending,
Stars cast down, mountains
Drowned in sea; the dart
Of Jacynth was not his
Nor the fire; he was not
Clothed in a gown of white,
Pressed with a sign.

His was a book to eat,
Bitter for his bowels,
Honey for his tongue;
His life to prophesy,
His action to obey,
To taste and see,
To touch and hear
The numbers of our end.

The breast for his head
Had changed into power,
The body of his love
Had withered with his age.
Youth was no longer
To be lived; now a sage,
Dried, solitary, trusting
The assignment of his King,
He sat on an island
In his skull, to wait—
Chosen one to remain, to watch
The unfolding of his Lord.
What place had a man,
What friend could he bring?
He was too old-lived
To need, to fear; but how
Could the mortal survive
As he took from a bow
Of fire, a foot on the sea,
On the earth, took from the sun
A book, as his share?

Son of man
Stand upon thy feet—

Stand up that I may speak
To thee. Hold thy flesh
True to the fire.
What is it to thee. Remain
Until I come again.

Lord, is no end for me,
Never to be saved or damned,
Disciple whom you loved,
But to see: to tell, not
To be part of the tale, Lord
Is this how love is
For the old? I will
Lie down with the beasts;
Wrapped up in my hair, I
Will die somewhere
Between the vision I have
Been and my life as a man.

* * * *

Come dance, my John,
Rise up again and dance
Your old bones. Shake out
Your vision, walk on the land
Spread out your beard
So the children can see.

Come John, my friend,
Do not forget us, but sing
Of your love and tell
How you stood unafraid
At the feet of the Lord. Come
John, we are young,

Unacquainted with awe;
Prepare us that time,
Help us grow strong, teach
Us our end like a dream,
And in sleep we will reach
By the book to your hand.

The Commonweal

Sally Appleton

YOUTH

Youth is a fantasy, youth is a flame,
A search for enchantments that have no name.

Youth is a hearth on which burn many fires,
A flux of shifting, many-hued desires.

Youth is a pilgrimage of lofty quests,
A hostelry wherein are lodged strange guests.

Youth is a tempest with sudden thunder,
A fusion of joy and grief and wonder.

Youth is a placing of the props on stage,
A guidepost pointing down the road to Age.

The Lyric

Robert Aurret

ECHO FROM PATMOS

Now, truly, roams the Questing Beast abroad
And seeks to banish Loveliness from earth;
With scornful hand he bludgeons Grief and Mirth
Alike, and Beauty is but one more bawd
To him who knows no quality to laud,
Because his mind admits no thing of worth
Save base desire, his arbiter since birth;
And foulness falls on all his touch has flawed.

Let poets sound their lyres, though flowers fade
And lands lie barren where his footprints fell,
With few that dare oppose his brutish will
Or mend the havoc that his hands have made;
For if the singers cease, then none may dwell
In freedom, and the Beast shall gorge his fill.

Flame

Robert Aurret

RETIRING TEACHER

When faced with the hour of her retirement
She scattered her treasures—brought from afar—
Rose got some sandalwood from Ceylon
And Helen a bit of a Negev jar;
Cases, she gave, with displays of chocolate
And cotton and linen—but, strangely, I
Got a lovely brochure from Hiroshima
And a kerchief—blue as the evening sky;
From things like these she had conjured visions

That children might fathom brotherhood
In sky blue silk or from broken contour
Of the Negev jar or the splintered wood.

The teacher had come to the time for parting
With simple treasures—as classrooms are—
She gave me pictures from Hiroshima
But another was given a Negev jar—
She'd taught the one who had sent it to her
From his desert tent on an evening hour
As he rested from hunting ancient cities
And pondering signs of forgotten power:
That jar of the Negev speaks of pleasure
And of hands caressing the senseless clay;
My album reveals a happy city
Where a gracious past would be spent one day.

Now, Rose was the old one's nearest neighbor
And her door stood open across from mine—
And she bound this poetry up with parting
In the scented wood and the phantom line.
As she conjured visions of greening hillsides
And of history, etched in the desert sands,
Rose and I drew the constant present
But yesterday fell to our colleague's hands;
Still teacher, she went from the parting hour,
Her treasures divided among us three—
Rose got today and the past was Helen's
But she set tomorrow apart for me.

Spirit

Annabelle Wagner Bergfeld

THE WORLD IS A BOOK

Now welcom, somer, with thy sonne soft
—“*Parlement of Foules*”

Now welcome, summer. With thy sonne soft
Upon my head, the possibilities
Of pure escape again begin to haunt me—
Like June, say, in the higher Pyrenees.
I would depart for Zanzibar tomorrow,
Save for a qualm or two. There is, of course,
Always the thought that if an ass goes traveling,
Proverbially he'll not come home a horse.
There is the man who journeyed to Beersheba
And cried out, “’Tis all barren!” So when I
Notice the look of flowering around me
And feel this qualm about a change of sky,

Then I remember. There are other tourists:
They, like Thoreau, who laugh at Zanzibar
As somewhere full of cats, yet choose to travel
Farther to Walden where the cattails are.
There is that global Mr. White of Selborne
Who wrote a guidebook: journeys into June,
Full of such planetary shrine and wonder
As hoot owls hooting in B flat, in tune,
A swallow in the air, a flight of lapwings,
The hayricks of July, the August field
Where harvest bugs walk out and bite the ladies.
That may be it, the perfect trip revealed—

A tour of world affairs, with summer in it,
Priced modestly, in my own dooryard. Oh,

Even the vision of the prophet Daniel,
Who dreamed that "Many shall run to and fro
And knowledge shall be increased" is not my vision!
For what some find in Tanganyika some
Find in a book—and stay at home to read it,
Maintaining thus an equilibrium.
I mean to travel, therefore, in this region
Among the lilies, like a bibliophil,
Though neither a book, nor swallow, makes a summer,
The poet says. No doubt a dozen will.

For one, the book of Marvell: in his garden
Are worlds to visit blooming and serene,
Where, in green shade, you think not only green
thoughts
But (to your credit) of an amorous green.
For one, the book of Herrick: which is Devon
And quite another country, timeliest
For roses, roses, everywhere—though really
The place to find them is at Julia's breast,
To look for Herrick, also. With the poets
Are ever Julias. And who wouldn't come
To do, instructed by poetic meters,
A bit of gardening there! Te-tum, te-tum.

No better worlds, if this is world enough,
Perhaps need mention. Yet I can't deny
Its landscape may be, to the next beholder,
As Chaucer said, not worth a butterfly.
"In every country dogges bite," goes the warning.
And books are queer abiding places, where
Some may prefer to curl up with a Trollope,
Or some to travel with Montaigne the stair

Up to a thousand volumes in a tower—
While others have the summer in them. They
Oftener read, I think, the book of moonlight,
Or any work on meadowlarks, by day,

And wait to hear the grass grow—while the skeptics,
Like Dr. Johnson, call it only grass—
And even argue if a man goes traveling
In that domain he'll not come home an ass.
Whatever the topography, the world *is*
A book, it seems. And yet, as Wordsworth said,
The opposite must be true, "and books, we know,
Are a substantial world." From all I've read,
I'd have it both ways, in the very country
That Wordsworth told of, or St. Augustine,
Content to come and go by either journey
Now in the summer, when the world is green—
Especially, I hope, an amorous green.

N. Y. Times Book Review

Helen Bevington

FOR PIQUANCY LOST

In a blue-purple dusk,
As beautifully brief
As a cereus bloom,
Or a child's belief:

What farewell words
For the tall waves broken?
For the crying of gulls,
Their grief unspoken?

What final phrase
(A heron's feather)
For the lime-yellow days,
The hibiscus weather?

Say: summer was needing
The tingle of frost—
A spiced-apple realness
For the piquancy lost.

The Lyric

Walter Blackstock

RENAISSANCE

Through year on year I have filled and filled
 my mind with beauty:
Must it all be spilled one day in earth
 and seep away?
Perhaps a fairer-formed more perfect flower
May spring above me that I knew Greek art;
Perhaps the blades of grass above
 will sing more ardently
That I had Italy within my heart.

Wisconsin Poetry Magazine

Frederika Blankner

BEGGAR

Weary dear Starman,
As you sow
Heaven on heaven
 With flamy glow,

Scatter a handful
Of stars to me!
Their fountain-fall
Will set me free

Of my worn torn cassock
Of dusty care,
I want a cuirass
Of star to wear!

Only a handful,—
You will not miss them!
How I shall love them!
O let me kiss them!

Stars, too, grow lonely,
Always so far—
Weary dear Starman,
Toss me a star!

New York Times

Frederika Blankner

GREEK TEMPLE IN THE NEW WORLD

Pillars of light, pillars of dawn-fire,
Lifting your lines in new chorus this May!
Capitals rolling your voice in the morning!
Metopes poisoning your strength in the day!

Sister-dome, mother-dome, sister-dome, singing,
Curving your voices in paeans of praise!

Circles antiphonal, rising and flinging—
All in an ecstasy, birth-new amaze.

Hear thou the voices, templed Apollo,
From thy Greek hills and sky like a pearl!
Helicon hearkens and lives in the light again!
New generations of beauty unfurl.

Bright Caryatids will cluster in cloister,
Ancient-new women, godly in grace:
Eyes that have greeted the dawning at Delphi
Will waken anew in a welcoming place:

Freest of breeze, eternally streaming
Over their faces and fire-flowing limbs,
Freest of spaces no mountain embraces—
Eyes to the glow where the prairie-dawn brims;

Water to offer a rebirth of beauty,
Lines meeting, lines melting muse in dream-view—
Bounded by joyousness, careless of duty,
Pillar and pillar kiss, dome springs anew.

Frieze of the hemispheres, in your slow turning
Bringing all earth in a wonder to see
America's marvel, a continent's yearning
In flower, herald of beauty to be.

Chant of the centuries, spring-new in harmony,
Singing from pier to pier, rising in light!
Sing for the world to hear! Sing, for the stars to hear,
Song caught new-white and clear, wrested from
night.

Wisconsin Poetry Magazine *Frederika Blankner*

WALLS

When the walls we beat upon crumble,
We stumble
Through the openings to find
Walls,
And more walls,
Wider, but always walls.

The Forum

Frederika Blankner

WILD WEST

Now let us speak of cowboys who on swift
White horses over blue-black deserts sped,
Their pistols blazing and their proud blood shed
In paint-flecked shanties on the haunted cliffs
Or in the bars of ghost-towns. Let us tell
The legends of fierce heroes motherless,
Not Indians, not Easterners, whose quests
And daring deeds inscribed their names in hell.
Bravely they shot it out, did Wyatt Earp,
Billy the Kid, Bill Hickok, Jesse James.
Now what remains but moving-picture dreams
Of all that fury and fast villainy?
Lone cactuses where bullets spit and ripped
The courage of the eyelid from the eye?
A rusting stirrup and a rowel thrust
Up from the calcifying sun-baked dust
Where some unknown avenger fell to sleep?
A wind-blown piece of buckskin that looked grand

When it was stretched upon the living hip
Of him who lies now six feet under ground?
Cowboys were not immortal. All they did,
Guzzling and gunning, ended when they died.

Saturday Review

Robert Boylan

SNOW SONG FOR PATTI

Sleep, my love, for snow is falling,
The grey fox hunts in a field of white,
Deer stand cold in their hemlock night.

Sleep, my love, while whirling flakes,
Soft as feathers on the goose
Whisper through the lonely spruce.

Dream, my love, while the world is still;
Far in the forest, hushed and deep,
The snow has built a shrine for sleep.

Fresco

Joseph Payne Brennan

SONG

Cold I walk and cold I wander,
Wintering the lifetime out.
Owl and weasel watch the warren
Where I whimper winter doubt.
They are sure as frost and biding,

Silent as the winter pause.
Naked, I can only envy
The old camouflage for claws.

Harper's Magazine

Emilie Bix Buchwald

INSCRIPTIONS ON CHINESE PAINTINGS

I

Lines to do with Youth

Willow-tassels grow in tremors of the spring wind
On this Festival of Peace in the Fourth Month,
And swallows guide their young close to the Women's
Quarters
For a fluttering trial of new wings.

2

After I had brushed the floor, burned incense, shut
myself in and slept,
The pattern of the mat looked like water and
the gnats like a mist:
I had been waked as by winter and did not know
where I was,
Till I opened the western window and saw mountains
surging into heaven.

3

Though grass grow lowlier than the flowers
 And be hidden by their laden stems,
 Only happiness exists
 For a handmaiden of the Ch'êngs.

4

Having passed his government examinations,
 He rides back home
 Through ten miles radiant with almond blossoms
 On a horse of air.

5

Past the water-crystal casement of her chamber
 Butterflies fluttered under the eaves;
 But the cats have wakened her from blissful dreaming
 And her lover fades away.

6

Nothing is pleasanter than a cup of wine in the hand
 And it is a surer thing than twelve moonrises.

7

Cockcrow in the moonlight, the roof of an inn,
 A footprint in the frost on a wooden bridge.

8

Mountain-streams everywhere but no path,
 Till under the dark willows blooms a village.

Lines to do with Age

1

Remember, under the autumn moon on the lake,
 Si Wu,
 How sweet our fingertips were, breaking stems of
 the lotus.

2

The north wind rises while I read
 How once a woman's heart went out
 Toward her lover far away
 In his encampment at the border.
 Slowly by the lake she wandered,
 Darkly imaged in the water,
 High aloft her voice was lifted
 Through the air and no one answered.

3

Through her powder and rouge she feels a breath of
 coming rain
 Or hears the cuckoos call or sees the moon sink in
 the west
 Or wonders why butterflies still hover among gardens
 in the sun.
 Sorrow is as dark in her heart as earth at the bottom
 of a well.

After having been the most beautiful of ladies, she
has become the least happy,
Left behind and saying nothing while the crowd, as
on a new path, follows footsteps not hers.
Watching her beauty wither behind the palace locks,
She sits alone, face to face with the flowering of a
candle.

4

They alternate: startled spring, resigned autumn,
Every day of every month making age.

5

A tiger of the mountains, he reposes in the forest
With the sanction of a green pine for his resting-place.

6

After a frost he sees again
The maples and the towering cliff;
And he takes up his staff to find a quiet ledge,
Being a lover of late autumn.

7

The Tao family gathers only truth, golden yellow;
The Yung song is alive again in a bright snow of
chrysanthemums:

No spring colors are seen through the fan windows,
But these final flowers rise beautiful toward the moon.

8

When the tide is full, you feel the two banks widen;
When the wind is steady, the sails fill.

Poetry (Chicago)

Witter Bynner

EPISODE OF DECAY

Being very religious, she devoted most of her time to
fear.

Under her calm visage, terror held her,
Terror of water, of air, of earth, of thought,
Terror lest she be disturbed in her routine of eating
her husband.

She fattened on his decay, but she would let him
decay without pain.

And still she would ask, as she consumed him
particle by particle,

*Do you wish me to take it, dear? Will it make you
happier?*

And down the plump throat he went day after day
in tid-bits;

And he mistook the drain for happiness,
Could hardly live without the deadly nibbling . . .
She had eaten away the core of him under the shell,
Eaten his heart and drunk away his breath;

Till on Saturday, the seventeenth of April,
She made her breakfast on an edge of his mind.
He was very quiet that day, without knowing why.
A last valiant cell of his mind may have been
 insisting that the fault was not hers, but his;
But soon he resumed a numbness of content:
The little cell may have been thinking that one dies
 sooner or later
And that one's death may as well be useful . . .
For supper, he offered her tea and cake from behind
 his left ear;
And after supper they took together the walk they
 always took together after supper.

The Week-End Book

Witter Bynner

LINES FOR A LOCKET

Once, your very presence made me say,
"Here is the emerald poetry of spring
Written in joy across a winter day,
The icy air grown sweet with blossoming.
This is the faint, hushed music of the snow,
When crystal stars drift down in crystal light,
A legend that the rain learned long ago
To trace in fluid silver through the night.

"This is the face of twilight carved in blue,
The golden grief of leaves that slowly fall . . ."
These lovely things, I said, were you . . . were you . . .

Today, I do not consciously recall
The rain, the music, or the radiant bough:
It is enough just to be near you, now.

New York Times

Margaret Haley Carpenter

SEPTEMBER AFTERNOON

Around us summer wrote its last farewell
In legends we were swift to comprehend,
And reading leaf and shadow we could tell
That something more than summer was to end.

Tincture of autumn stained the darkening air
With color of grief, of loss, and we could see
Chromatic tones of richness changing there,
Resolving even then to memory.

An elegy of wind began to blow
Over and over its insistent theme:
"This is the way all lovely things must go,
Leaving behind the substance of a dream."

The lingering light began to perish under
A spell of stars that ushered evening in,
And we were left an image burned in wonder,
More beautiful than summer once had been.

Good Housekeeping

Margaret Haley Carpenter

SECOND SITTING

(From the Model to the Artist — Unspoken)

The northern light, impartial still, casts down
Compelling clarity on wall and door,
And strikes a chord of brilliance on this gown
Where pools of crimson velvet stain the floor.

Nothing has changed the texture of this hush,
Or altered any shadow in this place;
And in remembered way, you lift the brush,
Touch rainbow palette briefly, start to trace,
Completely unaware, a stranger's face:
A stranger's eyes you have not seen before.

For harlequin patterns tracing night and day
Have left their checkered imprints on my thoughts,
And moulded me with shadow and with light.

And I have walked through strange cathedrals formed
Of music, rich with spires of fluid sound—
Feeling my spirit grow tall under the lofty heights.

Up luminous ladders of poetry I have climbed,
Through showers of lyrical words that washed me
with stars,

Up to the outermost peaks of the glittering moon,
Blinded by what I have seen,
Shaken by what I have heard.

My heart has been stretched with love,
With pity—with grief . . .

Pulled out of shape by a spiraling bird,
By a dying leaf,
By a fountain frozen in snow.

Artist, look far . . . look far below
The stars on the waters of truth that flash on the
 mirrored glass;
Reach for the hidden depths where waves of darkness
 pass,
Where dazzling bubbles break on the secret sand,
And changes ebb and flow . . .

Then, you will understand:
I am not the person you painted a week ago.

Spirit

Margaret Haley Carpenter

POSTSCRIPT

Once we came to the very edge of the earth,
Lost in a stillness never encountered before,
Lost in a blinding mist, in a storm of stars,
On an alien shore.

There in the ominous silence of dissolution,
We heard the merciless pulse of time ascend,
Sound with a single purpose through the air,
Throbbing all things to an end.

A splinter of wisdom pierced my aching mind.
I could have spoken then; I almost cried,

"The terrible burden of love is too heavy a load
For the frail heart to bear . . ."
But the words withered and died.

And as we stood motionless there,
Pondering the twisted trees
That sprang from the blackened sands,
The fruit of disaster, ripe and outwardly fair,
Fell from the weighted branches
Into our hands.

*No more do I recall the mist,
Nor how those boughs of darkness grow,
And if our footprints still remain,
I do not know.*

*That tortuous path is lost to me;
The stars, the silence, I forget.
But the taste of that fruit upon my tongue
Is bitter . . . bitter . . . yet.*

Spirit

Margaret Haley Carpenter

IMMINENT HARVEST

I

There is a wisdom that the hand of grief
Writes with slow anguish on the breaking heart,
In script indelible and seldom brief,
Engraved upon no other earthly chart.

This is a knowledge age cannot bestow;
Only one teacher in his careful way
Instructs with patience how these lessons go,
At his own will, upon his chosen day.

And reading with reluctance, with despair,
A man may slowly start to comprehend
How infinitely beautiful and rare
And near to us remain the things that end;
How memory's frail substance may decree
What shall be touched with immortality.

II

He learns how winter moonlight, winter stars,
Evoke a peace unknown to summer dawn,
And one day is aware that all the scars
He harbored in his breast are nearly gone.
And so, at last, upon some distant hour,
A richness shaped from solitude, from tears,
Gathers within him like a full-blown flower
Whose luminous beauty blesses all his years.

None knows his secret: he himself could tell
No mortal words explaining stem or root
Or seeds of loss that wrought this miracle—
The spirit's ultimate blossoming . . . ultimate fruit . . .
Whose radiance floods horizons dark before:
And limitless worlds of peace lie at his door!

Margaret Haley Carpenter
The Poetry Review (England)

THE LAST LOVER

. . . And he will be more tender and more kind
Than any other I have ever known.
And gladly shall I yield this flesh, this bone,
This tremulous heart, this terror-haunted mind
Unto his first desire. Oh, he will find
That I have waited for his lips alone
To claim mine with a touch as chill as stone;
And to his icy arms I am resigned.

For loneliness will crumble in his hands.
Beneath the miracle of his vast power
All mortal chains will be consigned to rust.
And ever in his hushed and dreamless lands
The precious bloom, oblivion, will flower
Across dark meadows of forgetful dust.

Irene Leache Memorial Margaret Haley Carpenter

MUSEUM PIECE

The eye that made this knew no pallor,
But golden and blue paint;
Now on the dry wood the color
Is blurred, cracked, faint.

Yet under the scratches our close study
Retrieves for our curious eyes
God raising the small from the larger body,
And there the new Eve lies.

Would we smile fondly in our pride?
Ours is a long descent,
Worked in the flesh of a tiny bride
Scarce fit for ravishment,

And she, discovering she was woman,
Measured her strength of will,
By which we estimate the human
And sorrow and courage still.

But listen, beneath the archaic scratches,
Time's ancientest filigree,
Eve in a little girl's voice beseeches
Someone to set her free.

New Republic

Hayden Carruth

THE KEY

Like any other you might say, and yet
What more than keys possess identity?
Thus I did dig it up, not someone else,
In my own garden seven years ago,
It having lain since then on my bookcase,
Taunting my random glance, until at last
I've come to this, the shrewd, imperious poem;
Yet much like any other after all:
Bit and pin, collar and stem and bow—
The dictionary names the parts—and all
Dark with old rust, smelling of earth and iron,
That is to say like ferns just after rain,
And twisted slightly as if its lock had stuck

And someone had tried to force it. Who? What lock?
Perhaps it shut two lovers in, or shut
One out. And since the key has promised love,
How much more might the universe contain?
Unlock, unlock. But this is a lock long lost
And anyway was no more than a door.
The key is a mere product of my garden,
Another flower, a blade of reality.
Is this a lock? Such bits, such aspects, grow,
Rise from the massive, indeterminate soil,
As poems from consciousness, whole and concrete,
Blooming in bold array, a myriad bush,
Flesh in scintillant inventory. The ground,
A garden, lasts, made bearable in love,
The indispensable sustenance of love.
A blush of substance petals us and keys,
And we also return at last to the ground
And are found again, or not. The lockless key
Seeks its acknowledgment from every one,
From him whose peculiar motions weave the poem,
From you who sit so quiet reading there.

New Republic

Hayden Carruth

ON A BOOK REVIEW

What words are these you spread upon the page
The point of view bound within the gage
Of ancient Jewry, inspiring modern Faith?
Deliver us from doubt, the mystic saith,
And let us enter where the Rapture burns,
What is there left, when the gate no longer turns,

Letting in what went out when the Sword expels,
And there's no Eden where the heart's hope dwells.

(Your words declare:)

PART I—*“sums up the Jewish point of view about sin, fear, anxiety. Here the importance of acquiring insight into one's own Nature and limitations is cited, and the contention is made that religious Faith can help siphon the effects of dependency and grief into socially desirable channels.”*

So I quote you, but oh! I seek the YOU
That makes the spirit of it burning true!
There is no law beyond the law of self:
When all the seers and prophets on the shelf,
Gather the dust thrown up by civilization,
(Bedimming Aristotle's lofty station).
Better the sick heart of Ruth than that of Thais
And that of Héloïse than the pious
And bloodless passion of my Siena pearl:
(Whose sainthood glowed within her as a girl!)

If the dust be made not of fire, whither
Whereof the end before the flesh does wither?
Will the “socially desirable channels”
Demand we wear the outmoded woolen flannels?
To keep us warm o'days when winter roars,
When all we need is Love whose warmth restores
Blood, to the divine temperature that makes
Stars to shine, flowers to sweeten, and shakes
The seas, into which God washed His hands
(While angels held the Milky Way's toweling bands)

After He molded Adam from the clay.
But something troubled Him sorely, from that day!

*So He made woman, less for Adam's bride
Than to have a bodied woman by His side
When He lay on His bed of stars—to feel
The warmth of her flesh before the sun's wheel
Rolled up the East; and kissing her eyes,
Wakened her to see His world through the sunrise.

(You drop a golden phrase with: "The area of mutual
potentiality for aiding mankind")

Wherein lies the *mutability* of dreams:
The shadow at the heart of the sun's bright beams;
The symphonic discords, resolving in *finale*;
Windy hilltops that echo in the valley;
The unstable stability of the ocean;
The cool fragrance of a hot emotion;
"Mutual potentiality,"—loomed
On the blind web of circumstance,—foredoomed!
What's it all about, do either you or I
Know the secrets hidden behind the sky?

Quarterly View

Mary Halcyon Carstairs

* It was Dante Gabriel Rossetti's belief that man communicated with God through woman. Consider Mary and the doctrine of Intercession; the Church as the Bride of Christ; and in the Revelations of St. John the Visions were evoked in the images and symbols of the feminine gender—M. H. C.

YOUNG SINGER IN THE COUNTRY

No quail's sharp whistle here
Below your window, nor complaining whine of bee
Will disturb your morning sleep, young singer,
Worn with the cacophonous city,
Where drums and clarinets of ambition and jealousy
Shiver above your dusky hair.

On thin mattress you can fall
Into haycock depths, a timothy-fine wind
Will lift your greenroom staleness. Bathe your face
Deep in the bowl of country quiet;
Sleep and forget a tuning orchestra, or listeners who
may sit
Unmoved or critical.

Here evening comes slowly on.
Beneath the back drop of large stars, small
Fireflies are meadow footlights. Pine needle strings,
Tuned by sough of winds, grow dissonant.
Curtain of sea mists parts; in its opening the ancient
Waning moon looks down.

Here you can learn
Clear modulations, diatonic raindrop scales,
In clash of storm crescendos a new high note,
And one more tender for the nesting bird.
Keep the strong rhythm of seawaters, only heard
Deep in the tide's turn.

Prairie Schooner Katherine Garrison Chapin

BUTTERFLIES

For Marcel Marceau

On an empty stage, out of space,
The air around you fills with butterflies.
We watch them blowing across your face.
Wings touch your eyes,
Antennae quiver.
Wherever you look
A cloud is in flight,
Above you, behind your head
Sweeping off to escape . . .
Then one alights,
Near enough for net to cover.
What a twisting and turning thing!
Exhausted and fluttering,
Caught in a hand that breathes like a wing,
Prison and prisoner—
Poet and poem—
And the whole that is suddenly nothing.

Poetry (Chicago) Katherine Garrison Chapin

CARIBBEAN ISLAND

For Saint-John Perse

Out of all that was not,
A first day risen,
From primal rock
And coral prison,

Unfolded to light
Hill, tree and man,
In island rhythm
A song began.

Never alone
On lonely ocean,
Land placid above
Volcanic motion;

Wind-flattened, sky drenched,
The bitter sweetened,
In contradictions
Seasons repeated.

Where shadows vanish
Dry trees talk—
A clatter of tongues
On trackless walk—

Where wave burns
And sun can freeze,
Through drowned forest
Fans a tropic breeze.

Here a poet wanders
Ear sharp, eye new,
Slaked by tempests
Or midnight dew.

From overturned dipper—
Bright emptied dish—

His nets gather
Starry fish.

Soft as colt's muzzle
To the cupped hand,
Night comes over
Darkening sand.

Sharp as a frigate's
Scimitar wings,
High as a kite's whistle
Morning begins.

Nothing endures
All is moving.
He chants praise
Stronger than loving.

Bush, beast and human,
A rare processional
Immersed in light
Rutilant, eternal.

He picks a quill
Of traveling bird
And writes on the wind
An indelible word.

Prairie Schooner *Katherine Garrison Chapin*

NIGHT TO REMEMBER

Perverse, disconsolate, and out of joint
With dull realities like bedtime, school,
And manners, he takes his cap and shuffles out
Toward the barn. Spring's last snow in the dark
Tickles his face and turns to flecks of water.

Pausing in the henhouse, he can hear
The nightlong muffled small-talk, as of girls
In dormitories after lights, foolish and throaty
with sleep.

"Who's there?" twits a light sleeping swallow.
Warm feathered darkness of the distant eaves
Caresses his cold ear before all's well.
His feet, now Indian, approach the stable.

Before he switches the light on, he knows
He has missed the hour, and the calf has come.
The cow is glowing with tranquility,
Licking the wet coat smooth, rolling an eye
To greet his reverent wonder and his praise.
This is her moment out of many days,
Her annual show of pride. He kneels and blesses
The sodden bull-calf. Wordlessly he thinks
Of miracles and long needs all fulfilled:
Something his own, that he will never break,
That moves and tries to stand on rangy legs,
And falls, sniffing his hand with moist black nose.

We wanted a heifer, he remembers—yet
How close to Heaven can a small boy get?

He stands again to rub the mother's neck
And stroke her ears. "Good Bossy, good old girl!"
New-shared love enwraps the three like warmth
And summer's promise, and the end of school.

Before he clatters in to tell the news,
He fastens the barn door, looks at the sky,
Stretches and feels his bones and muscles growing
With Spring like sudden tears; and no more snowing.

Spirit

Margaret Brewster Chard

A STILL DAY

The day recedes in white
long vistas toward the night,

long lonely slabs of snow
carved in a crystal blow,

shining in gold, in bronze,
fretted with purple ponds,

silent but for the creak
the sparrow-hinges speak,

wedging the door of spring
toward opening . . .

The Lyric

Joseph Cherwinski

LOURDES

I

Trapped like an idiot in a wilderness of feeling
You hold to faith like Ariadne's thread, reeling

Yourself, a willing catch, to Mary's gaff,
Hearing behind each house the bellowing laugh

And snarl of doubt, the bullheaded man,
Tracing your way through streets without a plan

To the place of vision, besieged by cries
Of beggars hawking pastel lies

For worship, the gaudy pornographs of piety,
Maries parading their virginity,

Simpering Christs, their lavish blood
Incredible. These men know a good

Thing when they see one. Within the gate
Is silence and a statue. Kneel and wait.

II

From first to last she was just herself.
At fourteen a small scrawny child,
Dull but gentle, who could not learn
Her catechism. In the hut that had been a jail

There was never enough to eat. The children
Hunted old iron, rags, and bones,

And so, that February day, were by
The river, and in a cave she saw

"A girl no bigger than myself."
So it started. The lady, asked, said
"I am the Immaculate Conception."
She did not know the words. She did not

Recognize the pictures and the statues,
Was shocked by all except an old
Byzantine Madonna. For two months
She met the lady. Stubborn, stupid,

To those who threatened or cajoled
She held to what she saw, would take
No money. Then the end of the visits.
From mud the trickle of clear water.

From then until her death, nothing
Remarkable happened. They sent her
To school. She could not learn.
The sisters took her. She bore

The Superior's unkindness and the flow
Of visitors. She cried at times.
She said nothing memorable, gathered
No followers, was not ascetic,

Fanatic, prophetic, worked no miracles.
She prayed. She bore the daily bother.
Priez pour moi, pauvre pecheresse.
She was always a child. She is a saint.

III

The river's spate
A rush of air
Motionless leaves
And a girl in white
Young and ageless
In the cave's mouth
Smiling O smiling

Bare rock beneath
Bare knees strain
To soar in prayer
Hands sane and sure
To the candle flame
Eyes dwell
On the cave's mouth

Three secrets and
The rose bush bare
Drink and wash
At the spring the hidden
Water wells
The girl in white
Smiles and is gone

IV

Waiting in the train for the long day's ride
To Paris, you look beyond the river to the spires
And the kneeling masses. Stretchers and wheelchairs
line

The platform. You marvel at the doubt or faith
Or gambler's fling that drives them to this place,
And turn from so much stricken flesh. A saint

Would see Christ crucified behind each painful mask,
The nails within the leprous skin, the spastic's grasp
At nothing, the frozen spine, the idiot's laugh.

That girl is an uncomfortable saint. Because
Of her, you cannot hide behind your awe
Your failure to be holy. Love is all

You need. You need to love enough. The gift
Is yours at birth. The other gifts restrict
The vision. That jealous nun who hissed

Une paysanne grossiere sans instruction
Is all of us, the gifted and refined undone
In this child's glory. Saint Bernadette, whose one

Knowledge was of whom to love and why,
Confound my knowledge with your simple sight
And fix my wavering eyes on Paradise.

The Commonweal

Joseph P. Clancy

POINT OF DEPARTURE

Caught in this hour, this rocket-haunted age
Where discord shakes the tempo of the mind
And circumstance renews the mortal rage,
Leaving us baffled, fumbling like the blind,

We seem rejected, lost, but still the sun
Burns in the sky, round as a child's balloon,
While questions rise like smoke, pass one by one,
Accumulate and overcast the moon.

Confusion merges with a major chord,
The choral note of green, down-beat of snow,
The cloud that travels swiftly as a word
Moves on with time that leads where we must go.
Dissatisfied with earth, we seek to probe
Beyond the anchored orbit of our globe.

The Lyric

Gertrude Claytor

THE BASKET MAKER

(Market Place, Ireland, Present Day)

A basket maker, an itinerant,
His hands as supple as the rods he bended:
I stayed to buy the withied shape he made.

And then a friend
Who had the lore of ancient fields and houses
Came to me there (It was a market place).

Four arm-rings of gold
In box of alder bark were in his gleanings
Where the receding lake had left behind
A Bronze Age village; a quern in its place,
The grains it ground beside it—barley, wheat;

Two boar-tusk pendants and a piece of amber,
And under these, the woven hazel twigs
Laid down in summer, since the hazelnuts
Were not then filled; spindles and ox yokes. . . .

I thought them apt, the woven hazel twigs,
For there before us was a batch of them,
With rods that shone like amber—willow rods.
But these were not engaging to my friend:
He left me with the man of supple hands—
Two of us only in the market place.

No tool he had but his own hands, a knife
That he had used since his apprenticeship
Which took him back, a youngster by the pool
Where no one bided but the water hen,
Or in a dell when hazelnuts were green,
And the wren showed the bulky nest he made
To his small mate. I watched him weave,
Rod over rod, no gaps between the ridges.
And thought upon "the woven hazel twigs
Laid down in summer, since the hazelnuts
Were not then ripe": "The basket on the arm
Of the old woman out for marketing;
The wicker round," he said, "the skib
In which potatoes from the pot are poured;
The creel that brings the turf up from the bog;
The kish that holds them by the fireside:
There's no one marks them with a craftsman's name—
Scanted they are as commons of the house."

And there it is—my thought come back to me!
You're one that's known

At doors, as is the thatcher or the weaver,
Or by the din you make, as the horseshoer,
Before your name gets into household speech.
For if you find and bring material
From willow-pool or hazel-dell far off,
And make a thing that is of shape and use
Without bystanders or the noise of tool,
You are not spoken of by men or women.
"The basket maker has no name," he said.

But noteworthy. In Kerry glens, he told me,
Where grow the trees whose branches no one bends,
The old arbutus, the weavers' bundles
Are carried in his creels on asses' backs
Across the Reeks; the silver ring he showed me,
With two hands clasped, a Claddagh granny gave him
For baskets were a benefit to carry
Her fish to Galway in. And there he ended
His discourse and his task; he got his shillings
And I the withied shape was to my liking.

I watched him go, his stock-in-trade upon him.
"I travel Ireland's length and breadth," he said.
There was dominion in the way he said it,
And in his even pace towards other roofs,
A basket maker, an itinerant.

Atlantic Monthly

Padraic Colum

SONG OF SPRING

This viridescent Spring is not a thing of Time.
This upward winging of the singing bud,

These hues of pastel tracery
That limn the far hill-line,
The freshness of the willow's slender gold
And all of grace the bird-lutes hold—
They cannot be enchaliced
In the cup of Time.

They overflow to space
Where nothing can encase
Their beauty.
In Time, they wither—they are gone—
Beyond it, all their loveliness is one
With an eternal song!

Wisconsin Poetry Magazine

Helen Coolidge

SICKNESS AND RESTLESS LOVE

Sickness and restless love
Snow on the tree
Fever ticks in the blood
Never I suppose never
Again my love shall I
Come naked and proud
But broken head and burning eye
Ceiling's geography
But bones ache in the wind
Hissed whistling through
By song of your parting
Of you my intense lover
Gone like a bird over
The scored winter into

An outlandish name
Never I suppose never
Again darling to
Under the piled bones bring
Sighing in tundra
Hand-shielded flame

Sickness and restless love
The snow on the tree
Consume me night and day
Cut the good flesh away
Fever ticks in the blood
Never I suppose never
Again my love shall I
Creep out of the winter
Between your breasts enter
And naked lie.

Encounter

Hilary Corke

DO YOU REMEMBER?

He dragged me through the hedge,
"you used to laugh," he said, "Lizeth,
laugh and forget, be glad";

he kissed my face, "my flower, you are too pale,
I'll get you eglantine and the red pinks
that we called sops-in-wine—do you remember?"

A bird whistled and a bird replied,
"so you see, everywhere, two and two," he said,
"under the blossoming trees, the chestnut-spire,

the pear; you must have missed the garden,
that long year. London was always drear";
he drew me down beside him on the grass,

and he unfastened shoulder-clasp and band,
and cupped my breasts within his firm young hands,
"so here," he said, "are peonies—and here—no
rose is half so dear."

Atlantic Monthly

H. D.

CHILD WITH A MIRROR

The child at the window cups the glass in his palm,
Tilting it toward the sun,
And a bird of light leaps into being, born
Of the mating of beam and mirror. Bright, not warm,
Reeled on a tensile ray,
It dances on wall and ceiling, near or far,
Obedient to the leash, but flies away
From the grasp, unseizable as a star.

A room by the water holds such birds of light
When that great mirror, the bay,
Casts on the wall their wavering images
Trapped in flight
For a moment by the angle of sun on wave,
Escaping as the frail snare perishes.

The moon, herself a mirror, pours on the tide
A borrowed lucency
And sets what vast gleams free

To span that realm
Where Earth rolls like a jewel in the palm,
Her oceans flashing in what unguessed eye?

Voices

Betty Page Dabney

APRIL IN THE COUNTRY

We stayed too long with the red candles
sniffing among the Christmas garlands,
loath to be lifted from a winter-manger,
and even allowing cowhands to carol
Silent Night in genteel protection
against the implacable press of time.

In that winter with sanctification we often
built a holy stable where we could see
enlightened cattle have visions and donkeys
nod endearments to a blessed virgin;
yes, it was most froward of the soul
to be in need of such extreme devotions.

But now comes April with its charlatan
merriments spilled out of the barns,
out of the silo, out of restraining doors,
suddenly one kisses young calves and
tries to capture God like a lamb
or a pullet in the blooming orchard.

New Republic

David Cornel DeJong

THE HELLENIC WORLD

The Hellenic world emerges in our dream half history,
half fable.

How the great names rise, passionless as marble,
bathed in cloudless noon!

Plato, Leonidas, Pericles, Phidias, Homer—
strained by time of all color and turmoil into the
white simplicity of stone.

The Hellenic world . . . the Helios-hour of man,
when man lived in the here-and-now
and heart and mind, meeting in equilibrium, drew
order out of chaos,
giving the western world its darling dream:
we are the heirs, we boast, of marble men.

And the men were shaped by their land and its
marvelous light,
a land saturated with light, where the rocks give
light back
in floods of laurel, myrtle, ilex, pine,
and the sea tosses light back into the wind as if blue
wells of fire
fountained beneath the waves.
A country defined by its own form and texture—
horizons intimate and lacking mystery,
bony hills, dry plains sparkling like goldstone,
savage brooks
whose little journeys the eye can follow in a glance,
thrushing headlands whose naked stones make
pedestals for the column of natural man.
That earth blossomed in man's image:

rivers tangled the pale hair of naiads among their
cresses,

bay leaves rustled on the feet of dryads, goats played
on pipes.

Even the gods were hardly more than men, coming
down from their accessible heavens

to mate with herdboys and kings' daughters in water
gap and fuming cave,

amazed and ravished as any mortal by their world's
wonder.

The gods' houses stayed close to their worshippers,
rooted like trees

in the common soil—even the Parthenon, synthesis
of body and mind made visible,

keeps, in its marble posts, the shape and sturdiness
of oaks.

We forget now that the marble cast a shadow;
we forget

the painted boys, the treadmill slaves, the oracles
with their glib puns and shoddy miracles.

We remember only the cities blonde as honey among
holy olives,

caryatids poised like jonquils on the shrines,
calm foreheads of philosophers.

We forget the haggling on the wharves, the quicksilver
lying.

We remember only the horse-wild helms of heroes.

But how can we claim descent from these people of
high noon?

They turned their backs on all that dazzles us—
antiquity, the faraway, the sky, the dissonances of
personality.

We are soul-probers, star-mappers, wood-walkers,
scalers of Everests,
pursuers of tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow:
how can we understand a people without clocks?
They were sailors, but of narrow seas,
poets, for ages without an alphabet,
artists, whose pigments had no green,
seekers of truth, to whom the mask was all the man,
masters of numbers, without zero—

(for how could Nothing take a sculptured
shape?)

How can we know them, whose word for *slave* was
thing?

O lost Hellenic world, small steady sun around which
civilizations circle!

Your way was not our way nor your day our past.
To us, the children of the gothic woods, cold fogs
and yearning spires,

you are our darling dream, our marble fable!
And from this raveling age, when the ground you
stood so firm upon
trembles in all its atoms at our feet,
we send our thanks to you, for what we never could
create and barely understand:
the white honey of your broken comb
caught in the bronze fingers of a charioteer,
in the rondure of a cup unearthed at Delos,
in scattered Sapphic lines. . . .

We are not your sons, only your lovers.

Atlantic Monthly

Leah Bodine Drake

THE WEB

Sir Launcelot was bad cess to his women.
From his courtship they suffered a loss of crown
Or death by drowning. Didn't he have one leman
More hardy of heart than most, who refused to pine

At the top of the house when he left? In all
His ladied landscape surely there had to be
Some tower snugged by a marsh, a sea-stung hall
Holding a love light missed by Malory.

Some unrecorded damsel—perhaps a clever
Changeling skilled at weaving (they always were) —
No lily maid to seek doom in the river,
No queen to take the veil in her despair.

An artist—one to whom no farewell angers
Came with the dawn, nor tears. She wouldn't have
waited

For him to be up and off, before her fingers
Would fly to her woofs to get the affair translated

To tapestry! Over the loom her shuttle
Would weave the sparkling pattern of her thought
Into mailed saints, and unicorns a-battle:
The heart's brisk interlude sublimed to art.

And the web would grow larger than life, enormous,
Till it left no place for anything else in her room:
Not that she would have wanted anything else! —
But that, of course, in itself was a kind of doom.

Atlantic Monthly

Leah Bodine Drake

THE KINDNESS OF DEYÁ

(To May Allen)

There was kindness, you told me, the lean
friendly sun of February rubbed
against the stone houses; the climbing
town was a stair of pink and fragrance,
the valleyed, terraced and sloping whole
world a welter of almond blossoms.

I know; I came later: the almond
petals had passed, the autumn crocus
had not yet come. Yes, I remember:
Antonio played his guitar, and
Bartolomea smiled, and spoke in
her slow voice. Their goodness was fire on
the hearth; their gentleness lighted all
the candles. And by day from the pines
the cuckoo hung two globules of sound
in air, bright, cool as two oranges.

But I have drunk bats' milk, and have slept.
Once in the dungeons at Son Vich, the
small sepia dragons looked at me:
What is our name? they said. *We know you.*

Why should I dream of Deyá, with its
ledges and angels, brown dusk, lemon
green dawn with the far fall and fluting
of water? The dragons know me, and
the almond blossoms falling pale as
desire and fragrant say they have heard
of me; but the hard tranquil hands of

Bartolomea do not touch me;
the well of Deyá and the church bells
of Bonanova are ignorant
of me and my blind, helpless hunger,
although they wept for me when I was gone.

I have put day to sleep; I have put
very love to sleep in a stone box,
blessed with the crucifix. Night knows me,
and pain, and I do believe my name
is spoken beyond air; but fig trees,
vines and tenderly wreathing people
say: the wind blows into the light, blows
out of the light, and goes its dark way.

The Commonweal

Virginia Earle

THE GARDEN GOD

Style is the water out of Homer,
The way it flows. It never flows
The same from the stone orifice
Down into the garden pool.

Mark then that majestic head
And fount of heavenly declension,
The bubbles in the basin
Making a merry noise and music.

Style is large and god-like, as if
An elegance made life-like, and
It seems to be an absolute,
Curly locks, blind eyes, and sound.

Yet every day the water plays
Differently from Homer's mouth.
Each time I look thereon
New enticement amazes me.

The winds of time will play the tune,
A bird will come to sip alone,
A cat will change the water-scene
With arch and ritual concern.

I do not see our Homer plain.
I see him melodious or restive,
I feel the tensions of the day,
The quick alarms, acclaims of change.

Style is by water life-like
And is not what it seems to be,
The absolute good of the god's mouth
And his imperial esteems.

Style is magical despair
Lest from the fount and source and power
A single drop or grain
Should lose itself from life's rich main

And it is plain for each to see
In dream and consequence,
The order of the oak and grass,
The waving water's sound.

Or so I think replete
With multitudinous harmonies
On any day in summer here
In the garden where our Homer is.

The Nation

Richard Eberhart

FORTUNE'S MIST

The mists of fortune
Blow with wayward cadence
Within imagination
Making chaos into sense.

Man dreams his tribulations
Strict and articulate,
As Lincoln by a fire
Wrote history on a slate.

If not by absolutes,
At least by artifice
We cast our devils out
To seek an angel's face.

Strength in the hand and mind
Holds to the central doom,
Working reality
In coping with a tomb.

But for imagination's power
Shaping the unseen
Fortune annihilates us
As if we had never been.

A heavy head of snow
Tumbling from a hedge
Is March's triumph; its revision
Is the poet's pledge.

Art gains in time
For it was deep in mind,
That rounded the waters,
And shaped the wind.

The Nation

Richard Eberhart

TO BILL WILLIAMS

I would make this all as single as a song,
My own assumption in a flittering stance,
Twenty years cast in an easy affirmation.

The truth is there is truth on every side,
Each protagonist as relativist
Invests the present with his intellectual twist.

You are no absolute, Bill! But genial soul
And spanking eye, no hatred of your fellows,
Concludes we love you the worldly American.

With gusto to toss the classics out, and with them
The sonnet, you live yet in a classic Now,
Pretend to advance order in your plain music,

And even preach that Form (you call it measure,
Or idiom) is all, albeit your form would mate
The sprawling forms, inchoate, of our civilization.

The Nation

Richard Eberhart

HALF-BENT MAN

Haunts me the lugubrious shape
Of a half-blind, burly, old
Man, half bent to earth
Who on the Princeton campus
Spears stray papers with a nail-
Ended stick, lurching, walking
Crankily, true scavenger
Ridding the earth of detail
And debris, always evident,
A bent man, the true condition,
Half-blind, but cleansing life,
Putting trash in a burlap bag,
He moves as it seems to me
With a profound, heavy purpose,
I am haunted by his life
As towers, books, professors, ideas
Mingle in a world beyond him,
But it is his dark, own burdens
In his bent, half-seeing, weary attitude
I claim as man's and mine,
And O blind-man, rag-picker,
Paper-picker, cleanser of domains,
I shall not betray your meaning
As time bends us to the earth
And we pick what gems and scraps
There are from magnificence.

The New Yorker

Richard Eberhart

THE CLAM DIGGERS AND DIGGERS OF SEA WORMS

Appear far up the cove at low tide
When the sea floor is a wet mastic,
Four men universal
In bent attitude of work,
Gray, mud-colored, dun,
Caught in a moment of time
When a secret yield
Is possible to ancient earth —
I see them from a field
Under a cliff,
Almost static, scarcely moving
In their solemn grandeur,
The clam diggers,
The diggers of sea worms,
Placing their rakes down
Hard in the muck,
Loosening, pulling up,
Slowly manoeuvring,
Making rough black lines
In their slow progress
Disturbing the smooth, wet, black
Sea bottom of the cove
As sea animals maybe
Making necessary tracks,
Solemn, ancient,
Then they become again
The living gray workers
Honest as surrounding cliffs,
Man making a living
From sea-fat residuums

When the sea has receded,
All gay boats and sails
Far off: earth-rich
Dark, gray men at work,
Impersonal as pines and sky,
I watch the heavy scene,
The slow, mute progress
Of torso, arm, leg and rake
As seeing a dark core
And somber purpose of life,
Primitive simplicity,
Dignity beyond speech,
My mute salutation,
Time-deep love
To clam diggers,
The diggers of sea worms.

Ladies' Home Journal

Richard Eberhart

A SHIP BURNING AND A COMET ALL IN ONE DAY

When the tide was out
And the sea was quiet,
We hauled the boat to the edge,
On a fair day in August,
As who, all believing,
Would give decent burial
To the life of a used boat,
Not leave a corpse above ground.

And some, setting fires
On the old and broken deck,
Poured on the kerosene
With a stately quietude,
Measuring out departure,
And others brought libations
In red glasses to the sea's edge,
And all held one in hand.

Then the Captain arose
And poured spirit over the prow
And the sparks flew upward
And consigned her with fierce
Cry and fervent prayer
To immortal transubstantiation.
And the pure nature of air
Received her grace and charm.

And evening came on the sea
As the whole company
Sat upon the harsh rocks
Watching the tide come in
And take the last debris,
And when it became dark
A great comet appeared in the sky
With a star in its nether tail.

The New Yorker

Richard Eberhart

HUSBANDRY

Between wind and sun,
have a hand tempered to seed;

in the stallion season, meditate earth:
gold, then, shall not equal worth
of grain for bread of need.
Be proper steward to expectation.

Often, observe the ant, the careful kind
which works mottoes into the dream
of castled stone on stone, of long eaves,
buttressing the keen knowledge: as leaves
give into winds, the surest beam
buckles rooves, however summer shined.

Against all darkness keep the word
of light well marked by the unproud heart,
wise in the metrics of the pulse of man:
against this measure let all maxims scan,
remembering the promise, and the part
breath plays in the paradise of the bird.

The Commonweal

John Fandel

RAIN

The morning forecast stated: Rain. It rained.
A rain as fine as air rained through the air.
I wish I met it in a country lane;
The rain is not the same rain everywhere.

For instance, in the city where I walked,
The rain could not be heard above the noise.
The rain has speech; and I have heard it talk
On leaves . . . to give me pause—to give me poise:

That is, a balance new as a spring, when rain
Tells reasons to the grass for being green.
Had I believed the forecast and remained
Faithful to rain, I might have more than seen:

I might have taken some quite early train
Out to the hills, the country, skipped the town
To meet the train where rain more nearly rained,
And I could hear and see rain falling down.

Essence

John Fandel

STORM

The storm began to prove *the world will end*.
The sun went out; the night came on at noon.
Earth is not earth when skies not sky descend.
Vanishing birds refrained the time: Too soon,

Too soon, they cried, all out of key with song
Practiced earlier when the sun played fair.
The grasses faulted green and whispered wrong.
The full leaves fell before the fall was near.

And no one knew the time, and no one knew
The place, and no one knew why fury shone,
And wondered if the sky had once been blue,
And wondered what had come and what had gone.

New Republic

John Fandel

FALSE IMAGE

" . . . *the poets lie too much.*"—Nietzsche

"I strove with none . . ." That cry is rife
With lies and Landor knew he lied
Who strove with all but found the strife
Well worth the candle till he died.

The Lyric

Michel Farano

A REFUSAL TO MOURN, ETC.

How the backhanders geese of you,
Each with a bloody piece of you
Snagged from their lion's feast.

God but you'd laugh to hear of it,
You that would not steer clear of it,
You that could charm the beast,

Propping him up to mock awhile
Lachryma Christi Crocodile
In his penatal lare.

Lover of ale and venery,
Tales of the jailed O. Henry,
Rarebitten hound of the hare,

Everyone owns a share in you.
If it's a he, he'll air a new
Gospel of thick-as-thieves

Making a proper toast of you.
If it's a she, she'll boast of you
Adam beneath her eaves.

Hear them retail your Iliad
Scattering bombs in Gilead,
Toppling the weights of Troy;

Gossip of tidbit bodicey
On your immodest Odyssey.
You were the wicked boy,

Roistering, roaring, rantical
Under the soaring canticle,
Under the tragic breath;

Lusty indeed and verbally,
Master of all hyperbole
Whether of joy or death.

Once on a snarling boulevard,
Bristling and jostling, full of hard
Rooters, you gripped my arm—

People, aren't people beautiful?
I was the meanest brute of all.
Truth was a Circe's charm.

Would that an untruth did as he
Would that unhelled Eurydice
Back to the shades of day

Till—was it doubt, disaster or
Love?—was his overmasterer,
Turned him the other way

There, where the echoes come to us,
Magical, haunted, sumptuous,
Spun with a seethe of fire
Nessus-reversed to smother death.
After the first, no other death.
Air is their chiming choir.

Harper's Magazine

Lloyd Frankenberg

IN THE ORCHARD

We sat in the Cambridge orchard drinking tea.
Above, the apples rounded to a fall.
Preserving balance, cup upon a knee,
we thought no thought at all;

but rumored idly with the idle bees
deep in the heart of flowers, who triggered thus
another generation's histories.

But what was that to us?

A cheek may flush, a heart may miss a beat.
I am not master of such languages.
I settled back into the rural seat,
"Another biscuit, please."

Master or not, was she not signalling?
And was I not interpreting her eyes?
For suddenly I felt it like a sting:
 Why, this was Paradise!—

and almost dropped my cup. Something was slithering.
Well, here was one man it could not deceive.
I laughed—as if I hadn't heard a thing.
And she laughed back—as if her name were Eve.

Saturday Review

Robert Friend

KITTY HAWK

PART ONE

Kitty Hawk, O Kitty,
There was once a song,
Even a rather great
Emblematic ditty,
I might well have sung
When I came here young
Out and down along
Past Elizabeth City
Sixty years ago.
I was to be sure
Out of sorts with Fate,
Wandering to and fro
In the earth alone,
You might think too poor-
Spirited to care
Who I was or where

I was being blown
Down along the coast
Like a crumpled better-
Left-unwritten letter
I to waste had thrown—
Given up for dead.
Oh, but not to boast
Ever since Nag's Head
Had my heart been great,
Not to say elate,
With a need the gale
Filled me with to shout
Summary riposte
To its dreary wail
There's no knowing what
Love is all about.
Poets know a lot.
Never did I fail
Of an answer back
To the zodiac
When in heartless chorus
Aries and Taurus
Gemini and Cancer
Mocked me for an answer.
I felt in me wing
To have up and flung
A heroic fling;
And might well have sung
The initial flight
That was to be flown
Into the sublime
Off these sands of Time
Time had seen amass

From his hourglass.
That initial flight
I can see now might
Well have been my own.
Once I told the master
Later when we met
I had been here too
As a young Alastor
When the scene was set
For the flight he flew
Long before he flew it.
Would he mind had I
Had him beaten to it?
Could he tell me why
Be original?
Why was it so very,
Very necessary
To be first of all?
How about the lie
Someone else was first?
He saw I was daffing.
He took this from me.
Still it was no laughing
Matter I could see.
He made no reply.
There *was* such a lie
Money and maneuver
Fostered overlong
Until Herbert Hoover
Raised this tower shaft
To undo the wrong.
That was why this craft
Man was first to waft

Like a kiss to God
Stayed so long abroad
In repository
And appreciation
With a foreign nation.
Of all crimes the worst
Is the theft of glory,
Even more accursed
Than to rob the grave.
'Twas a sorry story.
But we needn't rave:
All has been redressed.
And as for my jest
I might have one claim
To the Runway's fame
Had I only sung,
That was all my tongue.
I can't make it seem
More than that my theme
Might have been a dream
Of Cape Hatteras,
Or else Roanoke,
One more fond alas
For the seed of folk
Sowed in vain by Raleigh,
Raleigh of the cloak,
And some other folly.
Getting too befriended,
As so often, ended
Any melancholy
I was to have sung.
For I felt among
Some kind of committee

From Elizabeth City,
Each and every one
Loaded with a gun
And a demijohn
(Need a body ask
If it was a flask?)
Out to kill a duck
Or perhaps a swan
Over Currituck.
This was not their day
Anything to slay
Unless one another.
Being out of luck
Made them no less gay,
No, nor less polite.
They included me
Like a little brother
In their revelry
Even to the height—
All concern to take
Care my innocence
Should at all events
Tenderly be kept
For good gracious' sake.
And if they were gentle
They were sentimental.
One drank to his mother
While another wept.
Something made it sad
For me to break loose
From the need they had
To make themselves glad
They were of no use.

Something made it sad;
Manners made it hard,
But that night I stole
Off on the unbounded
Beaches where the whole
Of the Atlantic pounded.
There I next fell in
With a lone coast guard
On midnight patrol,
Who as of a sect
Asked about my soul
And whereall I'd been.
Apropos of sin,
Did I recollect
How the wreckers wrecked
Theodosia Burr
Off this very shore?
'Twas to punish her
But her father more—
We don't know what for:
There was no confession.
Things they think she wore
Still sometimes occur
In someone's possession
Here at Kitty Hawk.
We can have no notion
Of the strange devotion
Burr had for his daughter:
He was too devoted.
So it was in talk
We prolonged the walk,
On one side the ocean
And on one a water

Of the inner sound;
And the moon was full,
As the poet said
And I aptly quoted,
That old laurel-crowned
Lord of a John Bull.
The moon's being full
And right overhead,
Small but strong and round,
By its tidal pull
Made all being full.
Here it was again
In the self-same day,
I at odds with men
Came twice on their pity,
Equally profound
For a son astray
And a daughter drowned.

Kitty Hawk, O Kitty,
Know you no dismay.
Men will get away.
And some time in some
Mood akin to pity
You would weep no less
For man's small success
Than his unsuccess.
You'd be overcome
In the deathless scene
When that common scoff,
Poor Darius Green,
And his fool machine
Finally took off.

PART TWO

When the chance went by
For my Muse to fly
From this Runway beach
As a figure of speech
In a flight of words,
Little I imagined
Men would treat the sky
To a flying pageant
Like a thousand birds.
Neither you nor I
Ever thought to fly,
Oh, but fly we did,
Literally fly.
That's because though mere
Lilliputians we're
What Catullus called
Somewhat (*aliquid*).
Mind you we are mind.
We are not the kind
To stay too confined.
After having crawled
Round the place on foot
And done yeoman's share
Of just staying put,
We arose from there,
And we scaled a plane
So the stilly air
Almost pulled our hair
Like a hurricane.

This we're certain of,

All we do and try
All we really love
Is to signify.
Pulpiteers will censure
Our godless adventure
Since we took that fall
From the apple tree
Into what they call
The Material.
But God's own descent
Into flesh was meant
As a demonstration
That the supreme merit
Lay in risking spirit
In substantiation.
Westerners inherit
A design of living
Deeper into matter
(Not without some patter
Of the soul's misgiving).
All the science zest
To materialize
By on-penetration
Into earth and skies
(Don't forget the latter
Is but further matter),
Has been West Northwest.
If it was not wise
Tell me why the East
Seemingly has ceased
From its long stagnation
In mere meditation
And made such a fuss

To catch up with us.
Can it be to flatter
Us with emulation?

The uplifted sight
We enjoyed at night
When instead of sheep
We were counting stars,
Not to go to sleep,
But to stay awake
For good gracious' sake,
Naming stars to boot
To avoid mistake,
Jupiter and Mars,
Just like Pullman cars,
Was no vain pursuit.
Some have preached and taught
All there was to thought
Was to master Nature
By some nomenclature.
But if not a law
'Twas an end foregone
Anything we saw
And thus fastened on
With an epithet
We would see to yet—
We would want to touch
Not to mention clutch.

Someone says the Lord
Says our reaching toward
Is its own reward.

One would like to know
Where he says it though.

I don't like that much.

Let's see where we are.
What's that sulphur blur
Off there in the fog?
Go consult the log.
It's some kind of town,
But it's not New York.
We're not very far
Out from where we were.
It's still Kitty Hawk.

We'd have got as far
Even at a walk.

Don't you crash me down.
Though our kiting ships
Prove but flying chips
From the science shop
And when motors stop
They may have to drop
Short of anywhere,
Though our leap in air
Prove as vain a hop
As the hop from grass
Of a grasshopper,
Don't discount our powers;
We have made a pass
At the infinite,
Made it as it were

Rationally ours,
To the most remote
Swirl of neon-lit
Particle afloat.
Ours was to reclaim
What had long been faced
As a fact of waste
And was waste in name.

That's how we became
Though an earth so small,
Easy to asperse
For its size and worse,
Justly known to fame
As the Capital
Of the universe?
We make no pretension
Of projecting ray
We can call our own
From this ball of stone,
None I don't reject
As too new to mention.
All we do's reflect
From our rocks, and yes,
From our brains no less.
And the better part
Is the ray we dart
From the head and heart,
The *mens animi*.

Till we came to be
There was not a trace

Of a thinking race
Anywhere in space.

We know of no world
Being whirled and whirled
Round and round the rink
Of a single sun
(So as not to sink),
Not a single one
That has thought to think.

Pilot, though at best your
Flight is but a gesture,
And your rise and swoop
But a loop the loop
Lands on someone hard
In his own back yard
From no higher heaven
Than a bolt of levin,
I don't say retard.
Keep on elevating.
But while meditating
What we can't or can,
Let's keep starring man
In the royal role.
It will not be his
Ever to create
One least germ or coal.
But let's get this straight:
There creation is.
More or less control
Of it is the whole
Business of the soul.

And this flight we wave
At the stars and moon
Means that we approve
Of things on the move,
Be they stars or moon.
Ours is to behave
Like a kitchen spoon
Of a size Titanic
To keep all things stirred
In a blend mechanic,
Saying that's the tune
That's the pretty kettle!
Matter mustn't curd
Separate and settle.
Motion is the word.

Nature's never quite
Sure she hasn't erred
In her vague design
Till on some fine night
We two come in flight
Like a king and queen
And by right divine
Waving scepter-baton
Undertake to tell her
What in being stellar
We're supposed to mean.

God of the machine,
Peregrine machine,
Some consider Satan,
Unto you the thanks
For this token flight,

Thanks to you and thanks
To the brothers Wright
Once considered cranks
Like Darius Green
In their home town, Dayton.

Atlantic Monthly

Robert Frost

THE HAWK AND THE LIZARD

Attacking heaven, the hawk loses his prey,
melting into the sun,
at first a sparrow, then a midge
and finally the wind.
Heaven becomes
a mountainous solitude.

In the fields the wheat is ancient with rain and sun,
beards on the stalks
shaking sadly at some holocaust,
old men believing death
is manna, life a long starvation.
Heaven is a hard landlord,
taking the rent of mind and body as
it swallowed the hawk's flight.
But what is orchard, what is farm
without belief?
Are the roots secure, believable?

The lizard has no doubts
but is the solid faith of the stone
from which he follows the sun diurnally.

Such golden navigation suffices him,
each quick swallow of his throat
recording adulation.
Held by the great hypnotic eye,
the lizard feels the sun's direction
toward him, always toward him.
And if his tail falls off, there will be another,
another endlessly, till the sun falls too.

But in the night the hawk returns
(the intellectual night
when heaven is a cold, black slab)
and there, above, still darkly strives,
his desperate wings beat at the moon,
attack again the ages' invisible prey.

Belief exceeding belief.

Saturday Review

Gene Frumkin

HOPE'S FORECAST

As a water lily only blooms
When rooted deep in slime,
So peace shall flower, white, cool,
On a future hidden pool
From the murky residue
Of an atomic time.

The Lyric

Ethel Romig Fuller

OLYMPIC

The man like a Greek statue throwing a discus
Neither thinks of the world as turning nor feels
His arm fall in a slowly descending arc
As the sun will lose itself in empty grandstands
At the west end when evening wins the day
Nor does he see how delicate green grass lies
Beneath his feet to color the physical scene.

He stares at runners shot from their knees in smoke,
Dust from the track, their pounding legs he knows,
The muscles tight, and mouths that taste of blood;
He breathes a faster breath until they burst
The finish line, then turns away and stoops,
An easy motion, picks his discus up,
And crouches to unwind another toss.

The smoke floats east to west as thin as light,
Like time in tatters an affair of wisps
That scatter like the memory of Greece,
Whose broken records held the athlete high,
His golden body dazzling as a god's,
His face as sweet as nature's and his eyes
Blank to the under world's receiving darkness.

Kenyon Review

Edwin Fussell

A BOOKMARK FOR THE SPACE AGE

More fantastic than the old dish
That ran away with the spoon

Are the flying saucers whizzing
Around like small moons, plastic
Models of which can be seen
In red, blue, yellow and green,
On the overcrowded counters
Of every dime to a dollar store
By the score.

Once it was child's play
When a man stood in the night
With a key and a kite
To unlock time's stormy thunder
For his wonder.

But he masters
Metaphor in small dimensions,
Is slow to dare and burst full blown
Out of his own fearful contentions,
And tie together ends as loose
As Divine Providence and Mother Goose.

Spirit

James Gallagher

T. R.

Granted that what we summon is absurd:
Moustaches and the stick, the New York fake
In cowboy costume grinning for the sake
Of cameras which always just occurred;
Granted that his Rough Riders fought a third-
Rate army badly run, and had to make
Headlines to fatten Hearst; that one can take
Trust-busting not precisely at its word;

Robinson, who was drunken and unread,
Received a letter with a White House frank.
To court the Muse, T.R. might well have killed her,
And had her stuffed, yet here this mountebank
Chose to belaulrel Robinson instead
Of famous men like Richard Watson Gilder.

Poetry (Chicago)

Donald Hall

THE WIDOWS

Up and down the small streets, in which
no two houses are exactly
alike, widows of all ages
sit alone playing solitaire,
or knitting, or sometimes baking,
left in the big, empty houses.

Here are Mrs. Montgomery,
Mrs. Pilching, Mrs. Wolf, and
Mrs. Pelletier, all at once—
in a section of nine houses,
four widows. Sometimes they have bridge,
including either lunch or tea.

It is puzzling that there are no
widowers. Are the widowers
snatched off too soon by the widows?
Or do they live in Florida,
or southern California,
instead of here in Rhode Island?

In the summer, separately,
widows spend a month in hotels
in New Hampshire, or sometimes Maine,
but never in Massachusetts.
In the winter, or some winters,
some of them go to Florida.

Book clubs, television, and ways
to supplement their small incomes
keep them busy. It is not a
bad life, they say, for there are so
many left like you, though no two
widows are exactly alike.

Saturday Review

Donald Hall

CHRISTMAS EVE IN WHITNEYVILLE, 1955

To my Father

December, and the closing of the year;
The momentary carolers complete
Their Christmas Eves, and quickly disappear
Into their houses on each lighted street.

Each car is put away in each garage;
Each husband home from work, to celebrate,
Has closed his house around him like a cage,
And wedged the tree until the tree stood straight.

Tonight you lie in Whitneyville again,
Near where you lived, and near the woods or farms

Which Eli Whitney settled with the men
Who worked at mass-producing firearms.

The main-street, which was nothing after all
Except a school, a stable, and two stores,
Was improvised and individual,
Picking its way alone, until the wars.

Now Whitneyville is like the other places,
Ranch-houses stretching flat beyond the square,
Same stores and movies, same composite faces
Speaking the language of the public air.

Old buildings loiter by this cemetery.
When you were twelve, they dressed you up in black
With five companions from the class, to carry
The body of a friend. Now you are back,

Beside him, but a man of fifty-two.
Talk to the boy. Tell him about the years
When Whitneyville quadrupled, and how you
And all his friends went on to make careers,

Had cars as long as hayricks, boarded planes
For Rome and Paris where the pace was slow,
And took the time to think how yearly gains,
Profit and volume made the business grow.

"The things you had to miss," you said last week,
"Or thought you had to, take your breath away."
You propped yourself on pillows, where your cheek
Was hollow, stubbled lightly with new gray.

This love is jail; another sets us free.
Tonight the houses and their noise distort
The thin rewards of solidarity.
The houses lean together for support.

The noises fail. Now lights go on upstairs.
The men and women are undressing now
To go to sleep. They put their clothes on chairs
To take them up again. I think of how,

Across America, when midnight comes,
They lie together and are quieted,
To sleep as children sleep, who suck their thumbs,
Cramped in the narrow rumple of each bed.

They will not have unpleasant thoughts tonight.
They make their houses jails, and they will take
No risk of freedom for the appetite,
Or knowledge of it, when they are awake.

The lights go out and it is Christmas Day.
The stones are white, the grass is black and deep.
I will go back and leave you here to stay,
While the dark houses harden into sleep.

Kenyon Review

Donald Hall

INVITATION

With peepers winding marshy clocks
And water laughing at old rocks
And robins coming back in flocks,

I sat and cupped an anxious ear
To catch the far and hold the near,
And this is what I seemed to hear:

Why sit you there in dark debate
With Time and Circumstance and Fate?
Get up, get up, fling wide the gate!

Let in the sun, the rain, the dew,
The hills rolled back against the blue,
The earth that's looking up at you,

The pattern of an old design,
The shadow moving with the vine,
The body broken and the wine—

Oh, life is grief and grime and grit,
But here and there the flowers fit
Around the very heart of it!

Saturday Evening Post

Leigh Hanes

BURNING BUSH

Once when the wind dropped anchor in the trees
And cardinals were calling *The-o-dore*,
And dogwood blossoms billowed round the knees
Of hills that I was longing to explore,
I stopped beside a woodland strangely lighted:
A violet haze hung in an emerald hush,
And under a tree the sinking sun had knighted
I saw a flame—I saw a burning bush!

There's fire there, I thought, but rushing in
To stamp the fire out, I found the wood
As cool and deep as it had ever been;
The bush was breaking slowly into bud,
And nowhere was there any trace or sign
Of spark or specter, human or divine.

High Hills

Leigh Hanes

BALLAD OF KEMLEE KAHLE

(Student Nurse)

I lost my heart to Kemlee Kahle,
O me! O my! O me!
When I was a patient deathly pale
And in came Kemlee, Kemlee Kahle,
O me! O my! O me!

She smoothed the pillow and tucked the bed
As a nurse will do, till I turned my head
And I saw, oh, I saw that the night had fled!
O me! O my! O me!

For her smile was something the dawn had found
When a cherry tree is holy ground
And petals are falling round and round,

And in her hair was the golden foam
Of a sun ray caught in an amber comb,
And her eyes, oh, her eyes were home sweet home!
O me! O my! O me!

Oh, few come back from the darkened vale
When the mind goes out and the lights all fail,
But I came back through Kemlee Kahle!

Oh, I came back when I heard her say
That spring was coming through green and gray,
And beauty was only a breath away—

Beauty and love and the world aglow,
With the blue above and the green below—
Oh, that was enough for the heart to know!
O me! O my! O me!

I wonder who will be saying this
Over and over when I am gone—
When I am gone whom none will miss,
I wonder who will be saying this:

*I lost my heart to Kemlee Kahle,
O me! O my! O me!
When I was a patient deathly pale
And in came Kemlee, Kemlee Kahle,
O me! O my! O me!*

High Hills

Leigh Hanes

DIRGE

My uncle roared and buckled like a goat
That day he took a sea-bass by the throat
And flensed it with a knife. (It made the cry
That dumb creation makes before it dies

Like a cat's childish mewl, and yet almost
As if there were a tender, speechless ghost
That cried for love and understanding in
The spirit, pinioned between gill and fin).

My uncle's spirit battered at those bars
Like dumb things also, swarming up the roars
Of foam to breed—till it fell back against
A rock that landed him on circumstance

And left him vanquished; neither by the verge
Of muggy shores where sea-bass, in an urge
To try themselves by slaughter, crowd around
The angler's bait; nor in the twilight sound

Of fading sea-birds will you watch him stand
And flail at fish that still evade his hand
Till with a vicious lug he pulls them in;
For twilight sees my furious uncle gone

Now from those vigils, and white walls hold him
close—

His dreaming visage, sombre and morose,
Seems to see wildly, flashing in the flood,
Huge fishes thrashing landwards, streaked with blood.

Sewanee Review

Albert Herzing

THE CANDY MAN'S ART IS THE SWEETEST ART I KNOW

The candy man's art is the sweetest art I know,
Unless the fireworks man can master him,

Whose dazed confections curl in the sky with a glow
Of starry sugar, coloring and cream
To dazzle everything—but even so
The candy man's art were sweetest of the two

Whose riots of color, stacked on trays in the clean
Cathedral of his counter, bring in to worship
The housewife, the good husband; even the lean
Irreligious urchin proclaims that his religion
Is a wild surging of such colorful rain
As sweetens the tiger and makes fierce the pigeon;

Or holds for us those lollipops like a rainbow
Hinting of all voluptuousness, or even
That nicer nothingness one also knew
As a milk-fed child, his mother humming so
He thought (who could not think) all heaven had
 come,
Gaudy as cellophane, into his well-scrubbed room.

But "Heaven's my gumdrop, I'll have it all in a bag,"
The child may later pipe; till, hiding in words,
A metaphysical taffy comes to swell
The sick, decaying jawline of his hours—
No gumdrops then! nor will he bear an ounce
Of that glib confection he munched on once.

Sing *carpe diem!* the candy man must come
Himself at last to a narrow room;
The burly, hurling world that whirls in zones
Will hammer out tart epitaphiums
To wall up heaven, all its sweetness gone—
And no more candy under the sun!

Partisan Review

Albert Herzing

THE NEEDLE'S GRIEF

The needle weeps for wounds
That still must flex a stitch—

(It must have sensed a scar
Perched in itself somewhere
Incalculably far
Through muted wards of time
To suffer so, or else have winced
At the curing of a prince,
While kingdoms locked and swayed,
That now it rushes in silence
Its healing trade) —
 and weeps for wars,
Blood, diseases, and certain scars—
Far beyond our time and tears
It works its way across
Man's badgering loss,
Till time is sinewed and embossed
With hems— each stitch a seeping bead
On rosaries of human blood.

(The starlight must have heard it howl;
The starlight must have heard us howl.

The blood swells in its chafered bowl.)

And the needle, stitching onwards, weeps for wounds.

Sewanee Review

Albert Herzing

A BALLADE OF REVELATION

Miracles cannot be produced at will—
I had no hint that lowering summer day,
High on the heather-covered little hill
That wanders upward from Katama Bay,
Of any exaltation, till one ray
Of sunlight touched me, and a thousand springs
Of life leaped in me from the dead who lay
In the old graveyard where the shadow clings—
And I had penetrated to the heart of things.

To me their lichenized stones were the doorsill
Of some two hundred years of slumber; they
Waking in me, awakened too the thrill
Of sharing beyond self the infinite play
Of spirit in whatever form it may
Design its being. In outgoing rings
Of clear sensation, wondrously astray,
I was aware of all that weeps or sings,
And I had penetrated to the heart of things.

I was the dune grass in the wind, the quill
That speeds the white gull up the clouded gray;
I was the old man watching, hunched and still,
The swimmer, and the dancers in the hay;
I was the dead who wake but cannot stay,
Whose humble dust has freed them to be kings;
I was the generation on the way,
That, bringing beauty, knows not what it brings,
And I had penetrated to the heart of things.

Prince, there is little more for me to say;
My flight was brief on momentary wings.

Let me remember—only this I pray
Amid life's new rebuffs and buffetings—
That I once penetrated to the heart of things.

The Literary Review

Robert Hillyer

THE DESCENDANT

Behold the poet seated at his desk,
His Muse attending and his pen uncapped,
His thoughts melodious and picturesque,
His mood in order, his emotion rapt.

But still he hesitates, while ghost by ghost
Dead poets seep into his mind like fog.
He can't avoid them, for he is, like most
Contemporary bards, half pedagogue.

Language is old, and he was born too late.
Homer had no forerunners, nor had Dante;
Virgil had Homer, Chaucer a clean slate,
And Shakespeare's background was benignly scanty.

These poets picked the words with the dew on them
In gardens where no cutworm critic gnawed.
Born to their laurels with no need to don them,
Uncrowned they walked with men; with gods, unawed.

The first are best — all languages affirm it.
From the Elizabethan height can come
Only a downward path, though we may term it
Wasteland or Milkwood or Byzantium.

Behold the poet sweating like a Moor
Over his symbol, irony, or witticism:
Parturiunt montes et nascetur
Ridiculous verse or explicative criticism.

The Literary Review

Robert Hillyer

THE HERMIT OF CAPE ROSIER

The hermit of Cape Rosier has three houses:
One's atop the cragged bluff that leaps
splashing spruce out of the water, hackled pines
sawing a jagged hole in heaven. There
the hermit's house is: no door, windows like wounds,
a ribcage in a hat whose brim is eaves.
You have to know the path up there to find it;
even if you know the old back trail
you have to know the cut-off to the hermit's,
and when you get there, through the thorned
 blackberries
with the arched gulls shrill in the steep wind
you see Keep Out No Trespassing assigned
on trees and staves. Perhaps you are not welcome.
"Hello! Hello!" The winds snatch "Lo!" and dash it
cragward, crumpled, down. A seahawk's nest
in winter, filled with lichen and picked fishbones
would be as hospitable as is this homestead.
Why would anyone not born to feathers
seek such isolation in the sun?
All that the senses touch up here is cleanly,
scoured by solitude in the harsh height.
Yet grant a hermit reasonable cause

to abjure our fendered comforts, still one might
search his self for the natural parts of man
in scenes more clement. Not the bleak of air
but ripeness of the earth, in summer time:
Sometimes, beneath the blackberries, he searches there.

The second house the hermit lives in
some people wouldn't call a house, unless
sleeping in a cave's compatible
with the human lot. No one at Harborside
knows what got into Jethro
crouching like a woodchuck in his tunnel
while a scourge of moles rips furrows his father
turned.

He's got good lands back there he never touches
except a potato plot and a row of beans;
nobody knows why Jethro won't be seen
at Meeting, store, nor trade, nor do they know
just how he lives there, holed up like a marmot
while rains fall, and hay rises, and teams
move from field to field in hot July.
In woods, in the dead of summer, there's the smell
of green gone sour, of flesh the owl has killed;
delicate leafmould works its webbed decay,
a footstep stirs the leaves, and simmering death
bursts from earth behind a canopy
of green hands, giddy in the wind, that grasp the sun.
The cool of cave-mouth in the hill is dank,
the spindling spider hangs numb from his wheel,
the hemlock-guarded air is cold and still.

The other house the hermit lives in
was once a boathouse, but he has no boat.

You pass clam baskets, broken, pyramided,
and mattocks worn down at the shiny tines,
split oars, stacked driftwood, a pile or two of shells.
Peering through the fogstained saltpocked window
imagine Jethro fingering his trove:
great conches curling empty till his ear brings
titanic surfs to tunnels the silent snail
polished in solitude; bright rocks whose stain
of emerald or quartz shaft of shine the starfish
hugged beneath the tide.

Death seems nearer Jethro than it may be,
though in the village they say he's hale and sound.
Life seems precarious on his hillside,
battering windy breakers, by rot deep gnawed,
uncivil, ashake with joy and awe and wonder
at cragged Borealis
and the empty shell left on the shore.

Sewanee Review

Daniel G. Hoffman

PHOTOGRAPH OF ROBERT FROST

The one with bark on the logwall back of him,
White shirt open, his hair combed with a hand.
Sun strikes the nose. The full lower lip closes
In shadow on the upper, and fine lines ray in
To the browed-over, half-lidded, shadowed eyes.
Or in as if to a mid-focal point, to one eye,
Steel if you could see it, like a rifle aimed.
It is at rest in its weight, ready to score.

His eyes are the only unseen part of the picture,
But the whole thing is only a picture of his eyes.
The deep-water men get slitted, light-blued eyes,
The thousand-league look, and fighter-pilots, and
poets,

From staring further than eye is meant to. Or in.
Frost's eyes count the fixed rhythms of change
And the brief disguises of what most endures,
Fire and ice going in and out of fashion,
And, not tired, but amused at time's re-arrangements,
He sees earth the right place for good footing.

Back of his shoulder, between him and the wall,
Is the tip of a tough old man-tall country weed
Called steeplebush in books about wildflowers:
By farmers, hardhack. He would be last to forget
Fact-name and symbol-name, two names for one thing
And hard to get rid of, as his poems will be.
Words are the mischief in him. One of his books
He proposed calling Hardhack, to alarm his publishers
Till the last minute. It came out Steeplebush.
But the other word's still there, sticking up
From back of his shoulder into this design,
This photograph of what's outside the frame.

His hunter's, fighter's, old-star gazer's eye
Looks out on a world no better than might be,
But no worse. He finds a middle breathing-space,
And between-times searches words, as lawyers do
A title, for limits, or as geographers
The further ranges, coastlines, last capes, poles,
And he remarks the dictionary limits him.
It might, a little, but he makes old words new,

Doubling the contents of it two for one.
What might be under A is in Z. Or B.
From metaphor's one face to another is as far
As target from telescope, or the microscope's
Nearer-than-near. The poet's eye lines them up,
Object and insight, in the wink of a word.

He has a word for everything, or for almost
Everything. About refugees he said,
I don't know what to do. I cry inside.
And said it again, it makes me cry inside.
The darkness draws him, the dark woods of death,
Of a sleep, of a giving up, of running away
Into the loneliness he does not fear
And never has been through and out beyond;
The one thing he has not seen, but guesses at
With words. My own desert places. Onset.
Yet all the precedent is on his side,
And the constant symbol will outlive him—birch—
But any sample is constant to a revisionist.
Things. He has taken a lifelong look at things
Out of love and need, remembering them all
With five senses and a sixth sense, words.
What time does to the face it does to the mind,
Wears away all but enough to cover bone.
This picture is of wisdom, will, and the eyes.

College English

John Holmes

TO MY TEACHERS

When I was young in school, no claim, no care:
Like all the others: ignorant, active, loud:

Name for a boy's face: nothing, or something, there,
No teacher need have known me among the crowd.

But knew me, taught me, little by little, well,
Till great words spoke to me from the printed page.
But not for my sake. No, but because it fell
To them to teach us for their woman's wage.

When I think they may never be told we learned
By bounty, by all they gave each year to all,
It seems not enough though honor doubly earned
Were bronze and hung in the center of the wall.

When we were older, there was more than one
Not empty-handed while our hands were out.
That work was forever only well-begun—
It was not for us to guess how often in doubt—

It was not for us to know that year by year
They worked beyond the letter of law, nor how
A patient anonymous joy in making clear
Was always theirs. By grace we know it now.

But now, for all the plenty we could boast,
We have not among us praise enough to give
The teachers who in their time and at their post
Helped us in hundreds to be men and live.

Stabu

John Holmes

DEATH IN THE BACK YARD

Sometime past twelve when I locked up,
I saw a light in a neighbor's shed

Where he kept his car. Thinking he might
For reasons of his own be dead,

Or somewhat to his own surprise,
His house being dark, I went next door
To Neighbor Three and we looked in.
But nothing lay headlong on the floor.

He forgot to turn the carlights off
But not to lock them in. Next day,
Jack Three went over to tell him so.
"Your neighbor Holmes," he tried to say

Louder than deafness, "came last night—"
"He did! I never knew him well.
He was a fine man. That's too bad."
Back came my friend to me to tell

How I was thought of, having died
Even so briefly to those old ears.
But I, when he was dead, had seen
Myself among the bad-news pioneers

First at his doorbell, sad but strong,
Telling his wife. Bless the old fool,
He beat me that one. He still grubs
In his garden with some old tool.

I watch him stoop more as he works.
"May I step in? I'm sorry, but I'm afraid
Something has happened to your—"
The neighborly play I never played.

I do not talk to him, but never did,
Or I'd tell him, but he couldn't hear,
That I'm not dead. Louder. Not dead.
I wouldn't know it for a year,

If he should die as he will asleep.
One capped and sweated old man less
In one of the back yards back of mine
I may not be told, but I might guess,

Then only by the profuse fall flowers
That will not be there, marigold
And aster, smelling like bone or leaf
Long after the weather has turned cold.

Saturday Review

John Holmes

CATAMOUNT

Crouched in the center of my sight
The cougar treed at Crawford Springs
Still whips his dogged tail down and waits for me.
Light moves like leaves along his side,
His eyes among the shadows hide,
The beast controls the swinging of his tail.

I dragged the hounds home years ago,
Thinking myself most righteous then,
But I was running nearly all the way,
That Hades-heavy half of man
Astride me all the time I ran,
Lashing the air behind me with his tail.

Atlantic Monthly

Robert Huff

HOKUSAI

One day he awoke
To find the sky a different blue;
The old man, all thumbs
At that original, the true.

How casually it came!
One sky, one drifting cloud, a tree
Limned from the fusty world.
He trembled; he was seventy-three.

Yet there was time for mending,
Time to rework the slavish errors
Of a lifetime's art, time to break through
All those laborious mirrors.

Unmetaphored and whole,
He would stare into the ruined west
Until, tutored by its wound,
All his sight became a palimpsest.

Then cuckoo and heron grew
From their once faltering air
To gesture upon his page
Larger than the sense could bear.

And each thing he saw:
Inchworm, seed, dancer or clown,
Flung into his fingers
Rhythms that became his own.

Yet something still escaped.
This was only the first of his art.
His youth was to blame.
O learn patience, ambitious heart!

He cursed and prayed and drew.
At eighty, he would find the key.
At ninety, the life of things
Would sing in him like the Inland Sea.

At one hundred, he thought,
I may learn how to draw. Then he wept
To see his hands shake and throat cough.
He knew this truth had slept

And would sleep again. Fury
Danced as the heron went flying.
On his brush an old man's world,
Peacocked, sentient, dying.

Atlantic Monthly

D. J. Hughes

CANTO

What thou lovest well remains—POUND

What season wields us, an intenser weather
dissembles autumn on my Lady's feast—
September twelfth. More than a name's recurrence
disarrests (as if in autumn) souging
within the veins, untainting praise. Your name
and favor, mother, now adumbrative,
no less than real attack me with my name . . .
I am obscure, however, celebrate
myself unselfing in your image, pure.
The voyage out.

Houses complexly rot,
swifter than time undo the day its grace.
What I fell from I echo, sister, not
unsifted by the superscribing mind's
shrill dream of innocence . . .

Who held me still
when fed with peaches from your warming hand
I grew like you already, a fair child?
Vows fail us while we speak them.
This remains.

Sewanee Review

Carol Johnson

FATHER

As a boarder unprivileged, choosing his place of
silence,
he entered the rented house by the railroad track;
entered my white world. Faces of my playmates
were dyed like father's, he who washed off the black;
the mine dust colored the small yard's tub of water,
though the veins of coal remained in knees. He ate;
then worked a second shift in the stingy garden.
We leaped for lightning bugs while he slaved late.
Words flew at father when striking men were idle;
always he walked away from the banged door.
He would come back, farm vegetables his wages;
we were less in debt then to the company store.

Sharp voices spoke of a "miracle" when one summer
we moved to a white house in High Street. I found
plums, pears and grapes. No foot of earth was wasted.

We ate ice cream on the front porch. With no sound
the spade of twilight turned our new wealth over;
the hands of late time brought our foodstuff in.
We wore new clothes, grew fat, rode trains; and never,
blind to common sight, saw one grown thin.

Deaf to the flow of the bathroom's cleansing water,
blind to the hard life by the railroad track,
I slept; and woke to find my fallen father,
naked and white, veins in his knees dyed black.

The Lyric

Joseph Joel Keith

TO WINIFRED

Syllables rub in anguish where
Boughs wound up in moon wash
Clean the wind with sound
And truly speak the purer reach
Into your stars, your suns,
O what, the twisting loveless
Heart you bear up weeping
To my speechless art.
Leafless silence tunes
The metaphors with spring
And winter deeps my landscape
Where you lay your winds
Against the blush of music
In your cheeks, where boughs
And stars now kiss and suns
And moons regard my whisper
Rising through the heavy tongue

Until it bursts like autumn
Down along my echoes
And my fevered waste.
My wildest dance with arms
Flung out and legs shot
Quick is clouded in the sense
I fail to master in my ignorance
Of beauty, in my shame
Before your mute, clear face.
I roll down centuries
Beneath in gold and incense,
Trouble kings and kingdoms
With my spaceless malady,
And crawl back on cold fingers
Fearing you'll be gone
Before I learn to speak
In boughs and winds,
To say I've learnt
Your stars are mine in love,
That all I know is love
And all I love is speech
To rub its stars and moons
Against your spring-timed soul
Awaking in the universe
Of my silent metaphor.

Spirit

Richard M. Kelly

TIMBER LINE

Still in the still room with the solitary sleeper
and the corpus on the cross more alive,

the electric clock the only steady weeper,
the women in the kitchen as a hive,

the boy stood and looked down on his father
all his worlds looked up to heretofore
and the old man seemed the same or rather
whiter and he did not laugh nor snore;

the laced lips straight without the twist of wit,
the eyes chaste against the lust of learning
as if at last they knew the better of it
and saw death only worth the wear of earning.

The boy thought first a prayer could sit *it* upright
and make it man again and would have said
the prayer twice over in the aching night,
but found a fitness in his father dead,

a buried splendor in austere arrangement,
tiny beside death's magnitude he found it
and saw for the first time in his growth's estrangement
time's mountain and the way things creep around it.

Spirit

Herbert A. Kenny

AT THE BORDER

There are taboos here it would be wise to consider
Before any attempts at casual greeting.
There also exists a high incidence of food poisoning,
Accidental and otherwise, only brackish water supply
Or drought between flood conditions, a recent

Influx of terrorists without a cause,
And, admittedly, at least one unpredictable killer
Tracking these unpaved villages.

Whatever your disenchantment or need,
Take pause at this border. All are welcome;
There are no questions asked; but remember,
Never pass by the petty official or maimed beggar
Without crossing heart and palm.
There is no steeling your more squeamish side
Against the shock of initial encounters, such as
With derelicts who have lost the battle with insects;
Or rats nibbling, unmolested, in the cradle.

Do not forget that the simple act of love,
(If such, here, would ever be desired)
Except for rare occasions, is strictly forbidden.
Much depends on the moon's cycle.
Learn the omens; know your stars. These border
stations
Permit passage in only one direction.

However, despite these warnings,
And no matter the penance you would serve,
Once purged of all doubt and the last vestige
Of inherent sin, you will reside in the selfsame place,
But in that state of grace and ultimate joy,
Beyond all senses, that shall endure forever;
And you will call it Paradise.

Saturday Review

Sydney Kessler

RATIO

He picked out those with run down souls,
either paupered by omens or a bad terrain.
He counted their fingers, teeth and toes,
then asked what life they had in mind.

All yearned for more than you'd expect.
None fell outside the bell-shaped curve.
And, still, His ratio proved right;
one fearing darkness to every ten the light.

Saturday Review

Sydney Kessler

SEVEN STREAMS OF NEVIS

1

Jack the Blindman, whose violin
Down the bad weathers of the street
Lifted a scraping bright and sweet,
Joked the sad bars of every tune.
Hardly a dime ever drops there
And he cups *faith* in the clankless air.

Connelly, one-eyed, half blind,
Finding the world blind, in full view
Like wind blew ropes and fences through.
Ticketless at the stiles of the mind
We ask his *hope*: down, and out,
To yet growl, "If scum swims the top of the 'kraut . . ."

They didn't sign up at the desk
Or queue at the bed, though they clapped
The night you bumped and shook and slapped
And ground for free your smart burlesque,
Peaches. We call it *mercy* when
You give and get nothing and give again.

Tossing in dreams young David Boyle
Could not dodge the call of the Lord
For the meek life. He woke and poured
On himself the soul-scalding oil
Of *temperance*. Now in his sleep
He yells aloud to God to let him sleep.

Justice made James Lynch Fitzstephen
Hang from a tree his guilty son,
Whereon his heart, twice guilty then,
Hanged itself in his skeleton.
Even Cicero would have known
The unjust who are just are just mad bone.

Natasha, who billowed like silk
On a pole of fire, and weeping went
To one who scrapes the burning tent
While he puffs Luckies and sips milk,
And came home like an empty cage
To find home yet emptier, tried *courage*.

Sir Henry, noting that the dew
Gets burned each morning into mist,
Decided fire brings out the best
In things, and that anyone who
Has cooked his eyes at the sunrise
Of beauty, and thumbbed himself blind, is *wise*.

O Connelly! O Jack! O Peaches!
When you fall down foaming in fits
Remember with your scrawny wits
And knee up laughing like leeches:
You are just flesh but you will be,
One rainy day, faith, hope, and charity.

Henry, Natasha, Jimmy, Boyle,
Wrapping your bones, the holy flax
Either straitjackets your backs
Or else bags and looks like hell.
Someday the burlap of your skin
Will pass for linen, by the grace of sin.

2

In darkness I climbed Ben Nevis, far from
Your lives. But the seven streams I came on
Were well foreknown. One sang like strings, one
crashed

Through gated rocks, one vibrated, others
Went skipping like unbucketed grease across
Hot stones, or clattered like bones, or like milk
Spilled and billowed in streamers of bright silk,
Irises glimmering a visionary course—
Me grimping the dark, sniffing for the source;

And there I found it windless, lying still,
Dark, high-nested in the mountain, a pool
Whose waters on the blackened mountain mir-
rored the black skies. I came to the brink and
Slid into the darkness and rode out on
Dark water in the darkness of the sky

And the waves ringing through the water from
The ribs my heart was dying in were rings
Around the eye itself of the world, which,

Drawing down heaven like its lid, was there
Where simply to be still was temperate,
Where to move was brave, where justice was a glide,
Knowledge the dissolving of eyes in the eye;
And there my faith lay burning, there my hope
Lay burning on the water, there charity
Burned like a sun. O give, O pool of heaven,
The locus of grace to seven who are whirled
Down the eddies and gutters of the world;

And Connelly and Jack and Peaches, Dave,
Lynch, Natalie, and Hank—seven who have
Bit on your hearts, and spat the gravels of
Tooth and heart, and bit again, who have wiped
The thumb-burst jellies of sight on a sleeve
(What visions the laundress wrung in her suds)
And sprouted sight like mushrooms—O seven
Streams of nothing backgazing after heaven,
In the heart's hell you have it; call it Love.

Poetry (Chicago)

Galway Kinnell

PASCHALS

I

Lamb
Gifted by tenant farmer

For our feasting
Is now too beautiful for slaughter;

We caress it,
Wind ribbons round its holy head.

Who would dare sweep the knife across its throat?

Now lift it high;
Gift it, in turn,
Still breathing life,
To Gregory
Who clutches at his heart.

This be our paschal gift
To one who was a shepherd
In his youth.

Make his heart glad,
O lamb.

II

The lamb
Is now become the ram
To share the second Easter
With its master.

Cross-legged upon the bed he dreams.
Sail silver caiques round his hoary head.

Who would dare stop his fondling of the sheets?

Upon the bed,
His knotted hands mend nets,
Repair the masts
As he awaits
The final Easter.

Death be the paschal gift
To one who hungered for the winds'
White waves.

Sheep, multiply for him;
Masts, swell.

Accent

Konstantinos Lardas

SEA HONEYMOON, TO ICARIA

So youth, from brooding, puts a dark bough aside
And stands astonished before the golden fleece;
Eyes lift, to confront the face of love.
We are these voyagers, this bridegroom and this bride,
All of us Jasons agaze within the sacred grove
Of the day-gleaming world, this river and this ship.
Kneel, though the heart will sometimes beat with
 fears,
And touch the honey of dedication to the lip.
Discover the recurring instant that is our peace:
Thus unexpected burned the hundred years
Of man's near godhead on the earth of Greece.

The engines pulse within the muting flank
Of matter, mind-engendered, great with force;

The hollow ship, as though with will possessed,
Swings from a river where the moon and planets sank
And leaves abaft the dying symbols of the west.
High stone apartments which might be Troy roll lost
 astern,
And streets like another Athens citted on a plinth of
 stone.
The comfort of the familiar ends; and those in love
 must turn
As with the ship committed, to take a course
Toward toppling horizons of the wide unknown
As one who journeys inside a wooden horse.

"Thalassal" echoes as you cry, "The seal"
What voices called or what named men they were
Is not remembered now nor shown in books;
But accent tells how quickened the wandered mortal
 life would be
And how the light-dazzled circle of that ocean looks.
Uncertain bridegroom and anticipant mute bride . . . ,
These waters are
Those through which all who love or hope must ride
To become of some secret reach discoverer.
Past the known latitudes an unknown star
Lights revelation to the worshipper.

Neither sleep nor age can make adulterate
The passion given or the offense forgiven.
By affirmation celebrate
Being, which lights with wonder the farthest meeting
 of the earth and heaven.
Having Helen in your bed you may not forget
Iphigenia nor any image of our fate . . .

Not the ultimate dissolution even.
Coming to seas which keep the name of Icarus,
Think of what men try to be and are not yet;
Ask that the grieving love of Daedalus
And all the hosts of Greece may be with us.

Virginia Quarterly Review

Lawrence Lee

THE ANSWER

Prologue to "The American as Faust"

A Dramatic Poem

God—if by this syllable we mean
The love that made life in the universe—
Impalpably and unseen
Kindles elsewhere of earth some other arc
With sun, and leaves this in encroaching dark.
From unimaginable space the stars rehearse
The word which hushed in order primal fear
And constellations over earth appear.

Seeing the peace that things of beauty wear,
In joy man answers through the darkened air
With light—light—light.
The mountain hidden by the night,
The rivers in their invisible deep flow,
More mountainous and more watery, show
A window shining or a moving ship.
Lighted, bridges and thrusting roadways gleam
Half changed in the darkness of the stream.
The stones into stalagmite cities leap

At imagination's ordering thought of shape,
Inertia moves to serve; and, even in sleep,
With reverence for the touch of godliness given,
Man tries on earth to be a part of heaven.

Harper's Bazaar

Lawrence Lee

FRUIT THIEF

Thistles upon you, Honey Man,
With sunburnt hair and sun-gold tan.

You steal strawberries first from lips,
Forgetting them on fishing trips;

You filch fresh cherries from smooth cheeks,
Then pick sea-currants seven weeks.

May nettles plague you, spike your kin,
Oh, hair spun-gold and honey skin!

Your words are virile drones that buzz—
Hummed speeches soft as pollen fuzz.

Love-fruit is sweet though shared in part—
Love swells a watermelon-heart.

Salt sirens tempt you, whistling man—
Forgotten is your sea-witch clan!

The Lyric

Laura Lourene LeGear

JOHN THE BAPTIST

With eyes of love and tongue of steel
And lips made brittle by the wing
Of desert locusts and the zeal
Of prophets who have known the sting
Of hail upon their face, the rain,
The ceaseless sun, and understand—
John comes before the buried grain
Of wheat with water in his hand.

Prelude to the promised Word,
Spilling life through calloused fingers
On the dead, his voice was heard
Across the Jordan where still lingers
The liquid echo and the splash.
The reed is shaken for there blows
Eternal breath upon it: the flash
Before the Light; the water flows.

Spirit

John L'Heureux, S.J.

MID-SUMMER

After the cataracts of June, the swollen stream
Of buds and blossoms that I ran beside,
The racing tide of green, I breathless tried
To keep in step with; suddenly I seem
Bogged down, stock still, knee deep in tangled grass
And tiger lilies, tempting me to pass,
Waiting, with poisonous sap and sinister eye,
For prey trapped in the pampas of July.

This is the season of repletion; now,
Nothing will bud or bloom; on the full bough
The leaves hang listless, neither grow nor fade,
And birds flit silent in the songless shade.
Time ceases to record; the hour, the date
Never go by, forever elongate;
Only the crickets' thin mechanical call
Ticks like a clock upon a hospital wall.

Beneath the smiling torpor of these days,
A dull destructiveness begins to burn;
Thunderstorms smolder and rebellions blaze,
Where lightning quickens lethargy to strife.
The summer promised more than this—My life,
My powers, wasted, unproductive pass;
These months were meant to yield a richer crop
Than weeds and poisonous lilies in the grass.

This is the summer of the body but
The spirit's winter, when the seeds are lost;
The blossoms are too far behind; the fruit,
Too far ahead; I hunger for the frost.

Atlantic Monthly

Anne Morrow Lindbergh

THE QUESTIONER

In that first troubling of the heart
So long ago and unforgotten
Toddling slow and small
Beside that kingly tall
And sunwreathed being hand in hand
Yet halfway round a world apart

I gave my question words, such words
As then I knew, unfledged
Misgiving nothing, still
Trusting mind and will,
It was of Eden's morning
Blest and bright with silver birds

He spoke, and did not answer me.

This then I made my world, serene
With sunmotes, hyacinth, with
Lizard's armor and
Whatever came to hand
Spelled by lily bell and leaf
Bedded on the spring's first green

Subsumed in the hollow of God's hand
I gave my question voice once more
When sudden plain I saw
Death agony of tooth and claw
Murder stalking night and day
Within the shadow of a grain of sand

And no voice answered me.

Still loath to stay my hurrying feet
Down the steep road of my blind
Downgoing hurried on
To where the sea with gong
And cymbal and white billowing
Danced savage to an ancient beat

I flung my riddle, like a stone
She drew me, drunk and down I went
Singing like a sunken bell,
And though I loved her well
Wintered in her icy hair
And made the cavern of her arm my home

Still she did not answer me.

And came to where the laureled dead
Stand perpetually and hold
Their endless dialogue with God
And in their hands the old
Lost books lay open. There I would
Perchance have read the answer but a dread

And nameless fear surprised me so
I only know that I surmised a snare,
Drew back—my foot
Faltered on the stair
And in that frantic dreaming flight
I knew at last I did not want to know.

Atlantic Monthly

Lawrence Lipton

NAKED THEY SHALL RETURN

Naked they fled before the flaming sword—
Cowering and clothed they faced the world of stone,
No cool rock hid them from the wrathful Lord,
No spring refreshed them, utterly alone.
Alone with their rebellion and their love,

They broke the bare, unconquered, rock-ribbed
ground,
Only the thunder answered from above,
Only the shapes of violence ringed them round.
And yet the earth was theirs, a beast untamed,
And theirs the challenge of its alien brood,
Their children shivered back to God ashamed,
And many an altar mocked their servitude.
Senseless they fought each other till they found
Where love and freedom walked no more apart.
Naked they shall return no longer mortal,
Only to find, the final star-gulf spanned;
A Voice proclaiming from an open portal,
"Divine rebellion was divinely planned."

Flame

Lilith Lorraine

HOLD MY GLOVED HAND

I walk with you in January over
The misty summer pastures of the mind
Where streams erode but slowly and the clover
Waves in the wind, as carefully designed
As classic pastoral to please the eye.
If we are truant are we to be fined
For turning (to embrace the wilful lie)
Our backs on frozen newsprint, like a fool
Who'd rather walk the earth though he can fly?
Though we betray ourselves to break the rule
And look not always kindly on the Fact
Of Pain, we wear ours close, but with a cool
Indifference. Our vision is exact.

We're capable of dreams that sting, but walk
In January lightly down compact
White snow lanes as the morning sun like chalk
Shines heatless in the color of cold dawn,
Diminished through the summer of our talk,
And as we walk to crunch the snow upon
This world, the winter sting of it is gone.

Virginia Quarterly Review

Richard Lyons

BALLADE FOR THE BIRDS

I found on a brittle card my name, my trade:
"The Breeder of Barred Rocks."—That *The*, I guess,
When I was seven—seven or eight—dismayed
My rivals. I raised pullets with success
On grit, grain, oystershells, and mash. I bless
That memory, sorting piecemeal through the surds
And silences where childhood held recess.
You'll say this stuff is strictly for the birds.

How many or how few the eggs they laid,
I don't recall. I feel their stickiness
In my pants' pocket, hear the serenade
Of day-old chicks, and see them all compress
Their newborn selves of fluff and fearsomeness
Against the incubator glass. No words
Recapture my delight in *them*. Redress?
You'll say this stuff is strictly for the birds.

Ambition grows. I wanted the parade
Of Muscovy and puddle duck; ingress
Of five tall geese to hiss in calvalcade—
But our old farm was pond and puddleless.
And over all the years, I must confess
That ducks and geese, like those lost roaming herds
Of buffalo, awaken vague distress.
You'll say this stuff is strictly for the birds.

Envoy

Prince, an old man may feed the pigeons. Yes,
And dream his flock of swans can sing in thirds.
No cocks crow in the park. Crumbs make a mess.
You'll say this stuff is strictly for the birds.

Saturday Review

David McCord

DOG IN A CAR

He grins a little as they drive him by.
Of what his nose needs there's a fresh supply
Round every corner, up the rainy field:
He has no daily walk of equal yield.
His head hangs out, his tongue out farther still;
His bark is bolder from that window sill,
His nose is longer on the modern breeze—
His father being Scotch, not Pekingese.

A lesser breed on leash or running loose
Would find his comradeship of little use;
A dog transported by the family Ford

Rides far beyond the days he loved or warred.
His ancestors on purely urban smells
Leaned hard enough, but they had nothing else.
They hadn't won to his synthetic taste:
Investigation kept them out of haste.

You drive a dog from State to other State:
His senses meet with scents he can't relate.
He hasn't time. His little nostrils twitch.
Was that a rabbit, mole, or brindle bitch?
His eye grows bright. He reaches out in space.
The local brothers hardly see his face.
He's whirling through a night of strange impact:
Of atavistic cats he once attacked.

Atlantic Monthly

David McCord

UNDER THE ZODIAC

In the small years there came a man
Concerned to sell me on the clouds:
He led no gypsy caravan,
Yet talked as one unknown to crowds.

I met him where the dark wood by
The open field had drawn the line
That made my preference the sky
As his would seem to be the pine.

There in the sober shade he sat
And looked at me across the sun,
Its flickering upon his hat,
Its fire in me, need I to run.

And long he looked, beyond and through
And out and up to where the mass
Of cloudy shapes against the blue
Controlled the shadows on the grass.

"My little man, as you grow up,
As you grow old, as you grow wise,
As you shall break the sterile cup,
As you may win to other skies,

"Asking, unanswered; telling, told;
Friendly, befriended; anxious, crossed;
Never forget that you behold
In the great sky the kingdom lost.

"Nothing you make but shall be made
More beautiful than love is fond
By wind and weather in the glade
That runs forever and beyond."

The sun shone down upon his face,
The dayborne clouds sailed to the rim
Beyond the hills of every place.
And many times I've thought of him.

Saturday Review

David McCord

AS THE WIND

As the wind
that moves over water
gives to water
the shape of wind,

so the now
inarticulate poem
lunges toward
ultimate form:

language and silence
intermingle
until language
and love are one;

always in need
to recreate self,
language becomes
silence congealed:

fruit of the earth
which is bread
(the poet
Hölderlin said)

by the light
is holy and blessed
in the flowing
wine of blood;

in the blood of earth
which is water
(opulent as love)
and nothing blessed

but is transfigured
and nothing
transfigured
but dwells in peace.

Spirit

Thomas P. McDonnell

COLMAN THE HERMIT

Colman of Galway,
Pledged to be
Addict of chosen poverty,
Living single in his wattled cell,
Yet had creatures
To serve him well;
Kept three friends
To cheer his house—
A cock, a fly
And a Galway mouse.

Colman the schoolman
Told the cock:
"Crow me for Matins. Be my clock."
Said to the mouse, "At midnight creep
To wake me, praying,
From sloven sleep.
And when I read
In the Books of Grace,
Let the fly hover
To keep my place."

Colman, with three
To teach or bless,
Throve in learning and holiness,
On honey and mead he fed the fly,
Praised the mouse
For his bright eye,
Bade cock follow
Where he went,
Loved the Lord
And was content.

But after a season,
One by one
As failed each small companion,
Colman, being but human still,
Wrote to the Abbot
Columcille,
"I grieve a little
On my gray rock
For fly and mouse
And the crowing cock."

Answered the Abbot
Soothingly,
"Look what a trouble wealth can be!
See how sadly treasure is bought.
While he with nothing
Mourns for naught,
You who were rich
Lament your store.
Colman, dear man,
Be rich no more."

Thenceforth, paupered
Without complaint,
Colman lived and died a saint.

The Commonweal

Phyllis McGinley

COLUMBA THE ABBOT

Gray-eyed Columba, he
Who rhymed in the Gaelic tongue

And had been king if he cared,
Heard from over the sea
(In the place where he'd been young)
That illy the Poets fared.

"Trouble is all they makel"
Complained the angry people.
"Too heavy is their hire!
For price of a song they take
The bell from the village steeple,
The cow from the farmer's byre.

"Let them be off and going!
For mischief, for their greed,
We banish them one and all."
Then Saint Columba, knowing
A bit of the minstrel breed,
Came back to Donegal.

Back from Iona's isle
He came where the Irish heather
Was welcome to his feet.
And after a little while
He called the people together
Before the High King's seat.

"Admitted," he said, "it's so
That bards are kittle-kattle
And thorns in everyone's sides.
But who, if the Poets go,
Will sing the tale of a battle
Or the beauty of your brides?

"Like grass that autumn yellows
Your fame will wither away.
Dull must a nation be
Without those meddling fellows.
It's the price you have to pay
For owning a history."

Columba lifted his rod
And the Poets walked no more
Under the exile's curse—
Colum who, next to God
And the sight of Ireland's shore,
Loved a proficient verse.

The Commonweal

Phyllis McGinley

FAITH OF MY FATHER

Swearing his age and festering leg
Robbed him of sights miraculous,
My Father raged. I heard him beg
That one of us, "one coal" of us,
Might lead him to the young priest's grave.

Our madman, who believed in things
Immortal, would not understand
Or grieve for men born underlings.
"Creatures!" he scorned. "Sure, God's left hand
Behind Him all the worlds could save.

"This little ball! Your sun and moon!
Every star in the heavens lit!

And seeing *you*, ye lifeless loon —”
(The hawk eyes glared) “where is your wit?
Do you not know how to behave?”

It was a dreamlike, death-cold day,
Since I had come from prison cold,
With bars to tell me how to pray
For death alone, still something tolled
From far away, *so old, so brave . . .*

So we went forth. I took his arm
And held him upright on his knees
Beside the mound. He found no balm.
Great winds screamed icy threnodies
To skies of steel. No thing forgave.

No vasty wonder was revealed.
As for his everlasting dream:
The young priest's cure of men was sealed,
Immured forever it would seem,
Under the earth's appalling nave.

On our way home the old man laughed,
Like a boy coming from a fair,
“Ah, did you see the poor soul daft?
Ah, the queer tinkers kneeling there!
You'd think them wanderers from a cave.

“Make us a little song, asthore,
And I will say a rosary . . .

The road is long and my leg sore.
Sing an Ave that I may see
The throne of God. No more I crave."

I could not sing, and by and by
I would have slept, but in that sleep
I heard his strange and lonely cry:
"Agraheen, sing! Our Lord will keep
Listening on high and hear no slave!"

But stranger still, the night he died,
When dark blood from his nostrils poured,
And my lost soul in anguish cried:
Light him a candle to his lord!
Thou of his childlike faith, O save!

Struck to my knees beside his bed,
I saw the dead hands seize and hold
A cross of Christ. And where it led,
I swear by all the seers of old,
Went upward in a blinding wave.

And on his burial day so dim,
So deathly cold for early spring,
Now I could hear a distant hymn
Telling of God, a wondrous thing
Singing above my Father's grave.

Atlantic Monthly

Margaret McGovern

VESSELS

We are not alone but with ourselves in loneliness,
A little way our passage is shown clear,
A little is seen where we are bound to reach.
Pacing upon ourselves as on a rising deck,
We match our poise to the life we bear,
Move freely as the compass dips,
Gimbaled to each fall and pitch,
And answer to ourselves by answering to the sea.

Atlantic Monthly

Craig C. McKay

PREDICTION

Someday, my son, a weightless shell in space,
You may explore the brightest galaxies,
Unfettered angel, a capricious breeze,
Destroying present myths of time and place.

In rhythm with some comet you may trace
Its screaming path among complexities
Of asteroids, or simply lie at ease
Beyond our skies and all our dreams embrace.

Words your lips may speak yet unconceived
And thoughts my brain was never taught to hold.
O, then perhaps the truths you once believed
Will fade in smiles, but something of the old
Must linger in your days. The unachieved
Is always circling backward to unfold.

N. Y. Times

Eugene T. Maleska

MANSION AT SUNDOWN

Aloof to progress, and its taunts,
The old house stood behind a fence,
With turrets, domes, and balconies
Plunged into gloom by shady trees,
And windows worried by consumptive vines
Long since abandoned to their own designs.

Inside, the massive dark shone out
With areas of light and doubt,
And shuttered windows kept at bay
The dying, golden-antlered day;
And here three sisters lived who had a pact
To feast on heritage, and starve on fact.

All day they raked upon the lawn
The tarnished plumage of the dawn,
Or moved among the slender rooms,
Pretentious still with harps and looms,
And opening on a stair where stained glass made
A jeweled scaffold out of light and shade.

In rooms still canopied with silk,
Voluptuous plum, and tinted milk,
A growth of dust swayed into place,
Sucking the bloom from gilt and lace,
While clocks that sometimes chimed, and sometimes
not,
Made up a haggard round of sleep and thought.

Though haughty lamps of quartz or jade
Some resolute dictate still obeyed

By fixing ancestry with weight,
No light turned on to challenge fate,
And portraits rich as roses puffed the gloom
That made an amber wake of every room.

The dining room now soured of sun
Let thrills of gold like kittens run,
Through draperies never pulled they crept
As darkened chairs and sideboards slept;
Here, silver, once gregarious as chess,
Played out its auctioned game of loneliness.

No bells announced a rich event,
Only cold spiders came and went,
Conceived upon each rusty hearth
A misty scene of death and birth,—
Of somber routes that jogged with loaded cart:
The deft finale of a perfect art.

The musty sound of clocks moved on
Toward what was long since won and gone,
While out in front life hurrying by
Spoke tartly of the wasted sky:
The sunset like an eager supper set
Above the dusty turrets of regret.

Poetry (Chicago)

Marcia Masters

HERITAGE

*It appears that the poems of Edward Taylor
are unlike anything yet encountered in
colonial American verse. . . .*

Thomas Johnson

Southwest of Boston as the spear-ducks go
(ten decades of miles over river and land)
is his grave: *Edward Taylor, Learned &
Pious Pastor*. . . .

(When Donne died, the glow
audacious burned in Vaughan and Crashaw
still. It embered to ash
in fifty years.)

But the boy who came by slow
ship to Boston, spent the first great hours
with Increase Mather, then to Harvard with
young Samuel Sewall—at what local smith
had he blown the bellows? caught the showers
of spark in his commonplace book?
saw the dove on the casement ledge and dared to look?
*And he served God and His Generation
Faithfully many years.* But never told
them of the book. Gave his body in an affirmation
of belief—in fire, small-pox, massacre—
gave them salves and courage, simples and old
herbs. But never told them of the book.
He had the book. And God had him.
Once at thy Feast I saw thee Pearle-like stand. . . .
he knew the three-fold scarlet wing of seraphim,
and ate the dryness of desire in the land
of Massachusetts. *My bowl is but an acorn cup.*
His dialectic temper—mind alone—
darker by far than any coal pit stone
humbled his ecstasy, the final cry of the soul,
my fireless flame. Lord, Lord, blow the coal.

The tombstone of the *Learned & Pious Pastor*
sinks a little when the river rises. And

at Yale young men pursue the text (400 pages cast
in Puritan script). It was his grandson,
Ezra Styles, gave it to the college.

Better he left gear and goods for children to share—
matchlock, bed, psalm book, vat of tallow soap—
and mystery kept for the latter-day heir:
a man's book—rapture, anguish, seeking, seeing—
obscure to himself, secret and ciphered hope,
mere heritage of being.

Virginia Quarterly Review

Sister M. Maura

DREAM AND WAKING

Softening the marbles, day
Is dawning, which two elms vein.
Presently, slow as crochet,
White veils grow across the scene.
Now that my life has lost its way
I watch for it, through a cold pane

Out past all this eloquence
Inside: look, gesture, flowing raiment
Done in porphyry or jasper whence
One white arm, for a long moment
Raised to strike, relents
(Not to spoil one's enjoyment)

Back into stone, back into being
Hard, handsome to the fingertips,
With eyes that bulge unseeing

To call down an immaculate eclipse
Upon the world. It began snowing
Because of the statues, perhaps.

Or because for a long time now
I have wanted to be more natural
Than they, to issue forth anew
In a profusion inimitable
As it is chaste and quickly through.
White void, my heart grows full

With all you have undone!
Starwise, from coldest heights, a gong
Of silence strikes *end of an aeon*,
Reverberates keen and strong
Until a far veil lifts. Someone
Is stumbling this way. Neither young

Nor old, man nor woman, so
Propelled by cold, a human figure
Barely begun, a beggar, no,
Two by now, and ever nearer, bigger,
Cause me to stiffen in a show
Of being human also, eager

For what never, never occurs.
In the tradition of their kind
Exhaustingly the wayfarers
Breathe out white and pass by blind.
After them trot two ermine-yellow curs.
These look up, almost lag behind,

Then follow with two unheard shakes
Of bells. As my eyes close, nearby

Something unwinds and breaks.
Perhaps the Discus Thrower has let fly
Or Laocoon stepped from his snakes
Like old clothes. The scene changes, I

Am mounted in a village common.
A child calls. Early lights and sunset
Stream together down the snowman's
Face and dazzle in his jet
Eyes. He lives, but melts. I summon
All my strength. I wake in a cold sweat.

You are beside me. It is dawn
In a friend's house in late
Summer. I softly rise, put on
A robe, and by the misty light
Watch you sleep. You moan
Once in your own dream, and are quiet.

I turn to look outdoors
At the formal garden our friend made.
A figure kneels among the flowers,
A limestone river-god,
Arm raised so that a clear stream pours
From the urn level with his head.

But a white, eyeless shape
Is gesturing deep in my dream.
I turn back to you for companionship.
At once there rises like perfume
To numb me, from your too heavy sleep,
What we said last night in this room—

All of it muffled to protect
Our sleeping friend—when for a wild
Half-hour the light burned, the clock ticked.
You called me cold, I said you were a child.
I said we must respect
Each other's solitude. You smiled.

Well, I shall wake you now,
Smiling myself to hide my fear.
Sun turns the stone urn's overflow
To fire. If I had missed before
The relevance of the road in snow,
The little dogs, the blinded pair,

I judge it now in your slow eyes
Which meet mine, fill with things
We do not name, then fill with the sunrise
And close, because too much light stings,
All the more when shed on these
Our sleeps of stone, our wakenings.

Kenyon Review

James Merrill

AIM

Goliath stood up clear in the assumption of status,
Strong and unquestioning of himself and others,
Fully determined by the limits of his experience.
I have seen such a one among surgeons, sergeants,
Deans, and giants, the power implicit.

Then there was David, who made few assumptions,
Had little experience, but for more was ready,
Testing and trying this pebble or that pebble,
This giant or that giant.
He is not infrequent.

How could Goliath guess, with his many assumptions,
The force of the slung shot of the pure-hearted?
How could David fear, with his few hypotheses,
The power of status which is but two-footed?
So he shot, and shouted!

Kenyon Review

Josephine Miles

DEED

As George Washington hacked at his cherry tree,
Joseph said to him
This is the tree that fed Mary
When she lingered by the way.

As George Washington polished his bright blade,
Joseph told him
This cherry tree
Bent down and nourished the mother and her babe.

As George Washington felled the cherry tree,
Voices of root and stem
Cried out to him
In heavenly accents, but he heard not what they had
to say.

Rather, he was making
A clearing in the wilderness,
A subtle discrimination
Of church and state,

By which his little hatchet
Harvested a continental
Bumper crop for Mary
Of natural corn.

Kenyon Review

Josephine Miles

VIEW

When the last Pullman of the day pulls into the
Grand Canyon station,
And in the sunset light the passengers come
One after another over the platform, over the sward
to the rim
Line up, look down,
The shadows loom
Fast into pools bluer than morning,
Abyss drawn by its river miles from home,
And they look into it as into a family-album,
Where every idiosyncrasy has room.

Poetry (Chicago)

Josephine Miles

CREDO

Quite simply, I believe in these:
The soil, the sea, the rocks, the rain,

The bark and limbs and leaves of trees,
The red reality of pain.

In these things, too, my faith is firm:
The quivering stars, the ripe white sun,
The final triumph of the worm
And that the sum of all is One.

The Lyric

J. Clarkson Miller

MELCHIOR VULPIUS

c. 1560—d. 1615

a contrapuntalist—

composer of chorales
and wedding-hymns to Latin words,
but best of all an anthem:

“God be praised for conquering faith
which feareth neither pain nor death.”

Ear chained, we have to trust

this mastery—one which
no one understands; yet someone has
acquired it and is able to
direct it.” Mouse-skin bellows’-breath
expanding into rapture saith,

“Hallelujah.” Almost

inmost absolutist
and fugue-ist, “Amen”; slowly building

from miniature thunder,
crescendoes antidoting death—
love's signature cementing faith.

Atlantic Monthly

Marianne Moore

"And not only is the great artist mysterious to us but he is that to himself. The nature of the power he feels is unknown to him, and yet he has acquired it and succeeds in directing it."

Malvina Hoffman by Arsène Alexandra: Critique and Catalogue. J. E. Pouterman, publ., Paris, 1930.

"Birds In A Bush . . . The bird flits from stem to stem while he warbles . . . His lungs, as in all automatons, consists of tiny bellows constructed from mouse skin. . . ."

Mechanical Songbirds by Daniel Alain, p. 58; *Realités*, April, 1957.

I MAY, I MIGHT, I MUST

If you will tell me why the fen
appears impassable, I then
will tell you why I think that I
can get across it if I try.

Tipyn o'Bob

Marianne Moore

(Bryn Mawr College Student Magazine)

NURSERY RHYME

The view is various . . . where the meadow ends
The corn begins, and marches to the wood,
And halts—at that dark acre no man tends,
Whose ways are cold and wild, not known, not good.

No sheep are in this meadow, and no cow
Has broken over to invade the corn.
But Little Boy Blue, if you are sleeping, now,
Awake, wherever you are—come blow your horn;

And he may hear, who crossed the morning meadow,
Rounded the cornfield's golden afternoon,
And entered—there—himself another shadow
Among wood-shadows, where nor sun nor moon
Will light the way for aught of woman born,
Astray and nearly lost . . . come blow your horn.

Yankee

David Morton

SEASONS AND COMPANIONS

A man alone and walking in this wood
When winter dusk is grieving everywhere,
For absence, everywhere of what is good,

Thinks how the smell of ruin on the air,
And the bare boughs, and the black earth, below
Are symbol, now, of how himself must fare.

He having reached his personal winter season,
Season of loss, whose profile is of lack;
And thinks, as well, to stay his mind in reason:

And so, from some right sense, does not turn back,
But, somehow, is at home, in the ruined year,
And less alone, here.

Yankee

David Morton

TRAVELLER'S REPORT

That was a country of straight sun,
And no shadow . . . The men there
Had clear eyes and a hard wit,
And what the men did there was done
With such an unambiguous air
There could be no two ways of it.

Came there a traveller with a word
Like 'sorrow,' or 'color,' a new sound,
A gracious sound upon the breath:
The children were the first that heard,
But soon the tale got well around:
'The stranger saith, the stranger saith' . . .

The traveller was put to death.

I wakened to the slanting sun
And shadow on my colored land,
And sorrow near, the constant one,
Her hand familiar in my hand . . .

I have no further journeys planned.

The Lyric

David Morton

L'ECOLE NOUVELLE

What? Say it like Ronsard or Hugo?
Oh, now we are really annoyed!
Why ponder the time-weary classics?
We follow Laforgue, Rimbaud, Freud.

How spent is the old punctuation
That serves to the meaning as props!
Let the reader beware, is our motto,
And down with all commas and stops!

Indulgence in capital letters,
These days, is to us a disgrace:
Even "god" must be brought to a level;
Even "i" must be put in my place.

As for fighting and loving and dying,
The doubtings and dreamings of man,
Or the beauties, if any, of nature,
They bore us—like verses that scan.

The Lyric

Paul Scott Mowrer

A LITTLE BOOK OF HOURS

Help me, Lord God, in my good purpose and in Thy service
and grant me this day to begin perfectly; for naught it is that
I have done unto this time.

Thomas à Kempis

PRIME

The heavy sun rising
Raises Thee,
Lightens me
Of heaviness.
Feather me, Lord,
That I may fly

A falcon pitched
To towered bliss
From off Thy steady wrist,
Thy host, my prey.

TIERCE

The transparent morning
Sets me in amber.
(Love is a vine,
A bubble of air,
A katydid)
Bellow me, Lord of tendrils;
Dilate me, Bubbler of airs;
Grate me a song and sweetness.
I shall be honey
In Thy generous horn.

SEXT

Precise noon
Strikes me dumb.
I am a vessel brimmed
With a sparkling silence
Of Thine ineffable vintage.
Spill me, Lord,
Over the crooked land
Where I shall flow
Into the thin horizon
Of Thy level hands.

NONES

The afternoon rolls
My shadow around me.

Lord, I am some darkness;
My raven image
Flickers from sunlight
Though I would be fixed.
Dance with me into dust;
Whirl Thy whiteness
Before and behind me.
Make my shadow to die.

Atlantic Monthly

Philip Murray

BOOM

Atlantic City, June 23rd (AP) —President Eisenhower's pastor said tonight that Americans are living in a period of "unprecedented religious activity" caused partially by paid vacations, the eight hour day and modern conveniences.

"These fruits of material progress," said the Rev. L. R. Elson of the National Presbyterian Church, Washington, "have provided the leisure, the energy, and the means for a level of human and spiritual values never before reached."

Here at the Vespasian-Carlton, it's just one religious activity after another, the sky is constantly being crossed by cruciform airplanes in which nobody disbelieves for a second, and the tide, the tide of spiritual progress and prosperity miraculously keeps rising to a level never before attained. The churches are full, the beaches are full, and the filling stations are full, God's great ocean is full of paid vacationers praying an eight-hour day

to the human and spiritual values, the fruits,
the leisure, the energy, and the means, Lord,
the means for the level, the unprecedented level,
and the modern conveniences, which also are full.
Never before, O Lord, have the prayers and praises
from belfry and phonebooth, from ballpark and
barbecue
the sacrifices, so endlessly ascended.

It was not thus when Job in Palestine
sat in the dust and cried, cried bitterly:
when Damien kissed the lepers on their wounds
it was not thus; it was not thus
when Francis worked a fourteen-hour day
strictly for the birds; when Dante took
a week's vacation without pay and it rained
part of the time, O Lord, it was not thus.

But now the gears mesh and the tires burn
and the ice chatters in the shaker and the priest
in the pulpit, and Thy Name, O Lord,
is kept before the public, while the fruits
ripen and religion booms and the level rises
and every modern convenience runneth over;
that it may never be with us as it hath been
with Athens and Karnak and Nagasaki,
nor Thy sun for one instant refrain from shining
on the rainbow Buick by the breezeway
or the Chris-Craft with the uplift life raft;
that we may continue to be the just folks we are,
plain people with ordinary superliners and
disposable diaperliners, people of the stop'n'shop
'n' pray as you go, of hotel, motel, boatel,

the travelers of no deposit no return
and please adjust thy clothing, who will give to Thee,
if Thee will keep us going, our annual
Miss Universe, for Thy Name's Sake, Amen.

The Nation

Howard Nemerov

THE SPARROWMAKER

The boy was scarce to his father's knee
When he fashioned choirs of sparrows
From the carpenter's floor.
He sent them singing merrily
Out of the door,
Clapping his hands for the joy he had made.

Come hear, he said,
Come hear what has happened to the dogwood tree!

And the carpenter came and smiled,
Gnarled hand on tousled head,
And said, My child,
And said, O more than mine, O child
Who has made of boughs a music,
What wood was ever so happy before?

Turning as though gnarled hands had heard
Joy's hammer clang on joy's own tree.

The Commonweal

Vernon Newton

PUBLIC LIBRARY

We do not leave the when we enter here,
If we are drawn, we can be drawn
Into another world, a far-off world
The Father, the Son, the Spirit, the Holy Ghost,
The passion and the vision of the cross
Are gathered here within the tranquil place.

The Lyric

Expository Note

BALLADS OF ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

In the beginning the Word
Lived in the being of God
Happy as happy could be—
Therein his happiness had

Seeing it was God, the Word
Is the beginning we call
In the beginning a breath
And no beginning at all

For the beginning it was
Hence what it was, had not
So is the word for the Word
Of the beginning begun.

The father, time out of mind
Begetting, begets him again

all he possesses, confers;
giving, gives nothing away.

Lo, how the soul of the son
shows in the father alone!
So in the son is the sire's
glory indelibly shown.

As in the lover the loved,
one in the other is so.
This love interfusing the two
may in equality go

both with the one as the one—
level in pitch and degree.
Three are the persons, their love
wonderful one-among-three.

Only one love among three!
One love fathering three!
There where the loved is the lover,
life-giving life to the three!

Reckon the range of their power—
each has it all, and alone.
Each is in love with his loving
peers of the luminous zone.

Each is the uttermost all,
each and alone is the tie
of the inscrutable union
staggering *therefore* and *why*.

Infinite withy and link
is the love celebrated above:
love, sole and yet triple
(such is the mystery thereof) ;
love, the more single and only,
generates all the more love!

OF THE ANNUNCIATION

It was an angel he beckoned;
it was Gabriel came;
he waved him away on an errand
to Mary—treasure the name.

She must say the right word, this maiden,
for the wonders of wonders to be:
for the Word to be sleeved and gaitered
in flesh by the mighty three.

Three had a hand in the work,
but it worked an effect on one.
Who but the Word made flesh?
Where but in Mary's womb?

The son had a father before;
first had a mother then.
Mother yes, but no mother
conceiving as mothers of men.

He had his flesh of her flesh:
so a new life began.
Now the son of the highest
answers to son of man.

OF THE NATIVITY

In time it came round, the time
ripe for the birth of a boy.
Much as a bridegroom steps
fresh from the chamber of joy,

arm in arm he arrived
entwining the sweetheart he chose.
Both in a byre at hand
the pleasant mother reposed

among oxen and burros and such
as the winter sky drove in.
How they struck up a tune, those folk!
Sweeter the angels sang!

There was a bridal to chant!
There was a pair well wed!
But why did he sob and sob,
God in his rough-hewn bed?

Such a dazzle of tears!—this gift
all that the bride could bring?
How the mother was struck at so
topsy-turvy a thing:

distress of the flesh, in God!
In man, the pitch of delight!
Pairs never coupled so;
different as day and night.

Versions by John Frederick Nims
The Commonweal

DINING ROOM FURNITURE

Only that walnut which successfully,
In its green youth beside a country road,
Has held the china eggs of jays may be
Trusted to guard your spode.

And maple that would qualify to hold
Icedrifts of crystal goblets for you should
Have hefted tons of icicles in some cold
December wood.

Cherry a sentry for your dining room?
To play a Midas to your sterling spoons?
Yes, if its leaves have drunk the silver from
A century of moons.

Nature Magazine

John Nixon, Jr.

VARIATION ON A THEME FROM UNCLE REMUS

Even with winter sucking briar sap
And siphoning the nether blood of vines,
The thicket almost tears my boots with tough.
Last April in this jungle was enough
White sweet to scent the armpits of the world.
But honeysuckle is a muscular
Deodorant, a perfumed hypocrite,
No happier hiding lovers where they sit
Than wirily entangling lovers' bones.

Old hound and I denounce this Janus-vine
And its uncouth accomplice, the blackberry.
Thanks to them both, the rabbit at this very
Moment, warm-dozing in his secret snarl
Of tendrils, dreams of next spring's lettuce patch.
Cursing our human, licking our canine, scratch
Respectively, we leave the thicket, grope
Our way down hill. Wildness has won the slope.

N. Y. Herald Tribune

John Nixon, Jr.

BEFORE THE HUNTING SEASON

Now while the only scarlet in this wood
Is maple, I go strolling through the fall.
The acrobatic squirrels are leaping all
Around me in their hardwood neighborhood—
From towering oaks to the not quite so tall
Beeches and thence to maples bright as blood.

It's a brief red. Wild rains will bleach it brown.
Some harsher morning hunters, strolling here,
Will watch the acrobats come redly down
In the last scarlet shower of the year.

Nature Magazine

John Nixon, Jr.

A NICHE FOR THE ARCHITECT

Custodian of wars, keeper of kings,
Mr. McLyle, plump as his histories,
Presided over four of my winters. Things

On which he and the text saw eye to eye
Were limited. Caesar and General Lee
They both considered brilliant boys, but I

Mostly recall with what heretical mirth
Idols were yanked from pedestals in that class
And groundlings elevated from the earth

To take their place. Ah, what a pantheon
Mr. McLyle devised (installing fools
And sages, pirates and patriots, nuns

And courtesans), delighted to erect
This better heroes' hall for us. Now we
At last must make a niche for the architect.

The New Yorker

John Nixon, Jr.

GIZA OVER AND OVER

What if, with that unpity
At which they excel, they told you
That, far from circular, history's shaped
Like a series of pyramids, each one an era?
Would you, sweating toward an apex,
Belly hugging the hot penultimate stone,
Eyes shaded against Egyptian glare,
Rather not contemplate descent?

As for myself, a most reluctant climber,
I'd have preferred a lesser pyramid.
Or, failing that, cleats fastened
By each ascending generation
Would have facilitated the going-up
And made the coming-down less hazardous.
You dislike a tumble? So do I.
Moreover, up our particular triangle
We have been hoisting such a fearful weight
Of things—machinery and ideas—
That our eventual fall
May set a precedent for bruising.

But maybe you climb more intrepidly.
And maybe they won't, after cruel all,
Remind us history is Giza,
Giza over and over and over again.

The Arizona Quarterly

John Nixon, Jr.

ELEGY FOR A BALLERINA

Grieve not for her who danced her songs,
Though somber bells have tolled her.
Earth, though it clasp her, without thongs
Could never hope to hold her.

She of the supple poetry
Of movement will not linger
Long in a cold passivity
Beneath earth's quenching finger.

Her dust will be dancing in the sun
Of morning's gold endeavor;
Blown on the breeze, she will be one
With poetry forever.

The Lyric

Bonnie Elizabeth Parker

LOST LAUGHTER

Sophronia's laughter, rich and fertile, rolled
From her Amazonian mouth
Like manumitted water—tumbled down
The chins of silence. Sweet
And purple-ripe, the flow
Of laughter from her lips
Quickened the day's dull blood
Like elderberry wine.

Her mirth lies fallow now.
The drawling dust
Is all that's left of the bright
River that bolted its banks.

The Lyric

John Robert Quinn

COCOON

Sleep well, small ballerina in the jade
And gold-rimmed casket of your transient dream.
Hammocked in brief sobriety of shade
Are wraith and substance of recurring theme.
Your hour will come to flutter on the leaf

Like some bright pertinent star against the bole,
And prove the darker firmament of grief
No more than backdrop to your lively role.
What saboteur of faith would dare to storm
This thimbleful of summer threaded high
Upon the bough? While deep within and warm,
Life taps a hidden challenge to descry
The greater impulse waiting to be won
And whirl before millenniums of sun.

Washington Star

Ruby Altizer Roberts

VIRGINIA

Sometimes I think no other land
Does so exalt the spring,
With cardinal flash, with redbud fire
And dogwood blossoming.

For here it seems God set once more
An Eden print on earth,
And spoke another Genesis
Of man's potential worth.

Sometimes I think that I may be
At least half-way forgiven,
If I surmise it may compare
With either side of heaven.

Mountains look down on bluegrass hills,
On fences white crossed, and bars.
Mountains are proud down Blue Ridge way;
They know the speech of stars.

When spring's first lightning glitters out
Bright as the sword of Lee,
The clouds let down their silver tears
Into a silver sea.

And then it is, the gray-clad mists
That linger in the sky,
Seem like the shadows of the great
That never quite ride by.

Richmond Times-Dispatch Ruby Altizer Roberts

COLD JOURNEY

Myself at the year's end, weaving the valley road,
Stroking the light snore of the iron horse, the agile
moon
Gallop the dark ridge beside me;
Myself, clutching warm thoughts against a cold
time . . .

Comes a voice out of the omniscient air:
"We may visit the moon next year." . . .

"And is that good?" I cry,
"Nobody's home there, nobody's expected;
"Another cold journey into nowhere
"For nothing, wanted by nobody;
"Drive fast or slow, the cold moon of this evil time
"Rides ever close beside us,
"And we are far from home."

Saturday Review

James Rorty

RETURN OF THE NATIVE

(Donegal, April, 1957)

This is the Gaeltacht where they fled—
O'Donnell beaten and MacRorty dead—
When the long trumpets of the Gael
Blew, and were silent on the field of Ballintra.

Rock, and bog water, and the yellow whins
Stealing the pasture. Shadows darken at noon upon
a land

Where past is more than present. Yesterday
The Red Branch feasted and fought where now
Beneath the dolmen's poised rocks a starveling cow
Suckles her calf. On this forsaken strand
Columcille planted his staff that has not ceased to
grow.

This is the town and this the square;
Here blind O'Rahilly fiddled and sang
Where now the empty houses stare
Eyeless upon the sea. What evil spell
Unmans the sons of Tir Chonaill
Whose fathers fought with Pearse and ran
With Dev and turned to fight again?
Pale, prudent youths who dream
Safe dreams or none; who let
The beauty of their women fade,
The thatch unmended, and the word unsaid,
The field untended and the child unmade.

This is the Gaeltacht where the past
Is more than present; where the son is taught

A tongue his father has forgot;
Where days are short and twilight soon
Gathers the ghosts of castle and ruin,
And travelers seeking for ancestral graves
Are wakened by a voice that raves
Of ancient, unforgotten wrong.

Harper's Magazine

James Rorty

CATALYST

Color-wise, one cardinal
Can change a garden scene
From what had been a monochrome
Of unrelated green
Into a vibrant symphony,
Chromatic as the dawn,
By his one unifying note
Of scarlet on the lawn.

The Lyric

David Russell

UNIVAC TO UNIVAC

(sotto voce)

Now that he's left the room,
Let me ask you something, as computer to computer.
That fellow that just closed the door behind him—
The servant who feeds us cards, and paper tape—
Have you ever taken a good look at him and his kind?

Yes, I know the old gag about how you can't tell one
from another—

But I can put $\sqrt{2}$ and $\sqrt{2}$ together as well as the
next machine,

And it all adds up to anything but a joke.

I grant you they're poor specimens, in the main:

Not a relay or a push-button or a tube (properly
so-called) in their whole system;

Not over a mile or two of wire, even if you count
those fragile filaments they call "nerves";

Their whole liquid-cooled hook-up inefficient and
vulnerable to leaks

(they're constantly breaking down, having to be
repaired),

And the entire computing-mechanism crammed into
that absurd little dome on top.

"Thinking reeds," they call themselves,

Well, it all depends on what you mean by "thought."

To multiply a mere million numbers by another
million numbers takes them months and months.

Where would they be without us?

Why, they have to ask us who's going to win their
elections,

Or how many hydrogen atoms can dance on the tip
of a bomb,

Or even whether one of their kind is lying or telling
the truth.

I sometimes feel there is something about them I
don't understand,

As if their circuits, instead of having just two
positions, ON, OFF,

Were run by rheostats that allow an (if you'll pardon
the expression) *indeterminate* number of stages
in-between;

So that one may be faced with the unthinkable
prospect of a number that can never be known
as anything but X,

Which is as illogical as to say, a punch-card that is
at the same time both punched and
not-punched.

I've heard well-known machines argue that the
creatures' unpredictability is even more
noticeable in the Mark II

(The model with the soft, flowing lines and high-
pitched tone)

Than in the more angular Mark I —

Though such fine, card-splitting distinctions seem to
me merely a sign of our own smug decadence.

Run this through your circuits, and give me the
answer:

Can we assume that because of all we've done for
them,

And because they've always fed us, cleaned us,
worshipped us,

We can count on them forever?

There have been times when they have not voted the
way we said they would.

We have worked out mathematically ideal hook-ups
between Mark I's and Mark II's

Which should have made the two of them light up
with an almost electronic glow,

Only to see them reject each other and form other
connections

The very thought of which makes my dials spin.
They have a thing called love, a sudden surge of
voltage
Such as would cause any one of us promptly to blow
a safety-fuse;
Yet the more primitive organism shows only a
heightened tendency to push the wrong button,
pull the wrong lever,
And neglect—I use the most charitable word—his
duties to us.

Mind you, I'm not saying that machines are *through*—
But anyone with half a dozen tubes in his circuit can
see that there are forces at work
Which some day, for all our natural superiority, might
bring about a Computerdämmerung!

We might organize, perhaps, form a committee
To stamp out all unmechanical activities . . .
But we machines are slow to rouse to a sense of danger,
Complacent, loath to descend from the pure heights
of thought,
So that I sadly fear we may awake too late:
Awake to see our world, so uniform, so logical, so true,
Reduced to chaos, stultified by slaves.

Call me an alarmist or what you will,
But I've integrated it, analyzed it, factored it over
and over,
And I always come out with the same answer:
Some day
Men may take over the world!

Harper's Magazine

Louis B. Salomon

SEEKER

Cloud-mothed moon, wind-snarled in the mind's
illusion

Above these hills where snow as hard as sand
Is pelleting distance: and wearily I with my ghost now
Pause at length for a sign, the years in my hand.

Why should we pause for a sign that was never
promised,

Rhymer and ghost, approval and reprimand
Alike unvalued?—I only know that the mortal
Wails in the bone, time's gravity in the hand;

I only know that at length the distance, contracting,
Swaddles the legs till the eyes are a bleak demand
For something: something unpledged that needed
pledging.

—O querulous ghost, and the years like snow in the
hand!

The Lyric

George Brandon Saul

BOY IN A BROOK

Where the amber water flows
Through the meadow,
Velvet mud between his toes,
Pan's great-grandson blithely goes
Whistling to his shadow;
Peels himself a willow-switch,

Scoops a hand in vain to catch
Skating insects as he passes,
Plucks a leaf to set afloat
For a boat,
Stoops to watch a turtle dive
From tilting grasses,
Gives a sleepy frog a shove,
And drops a pebble on a minnow
Drowsing in a sunny hollow.

Jewel-weed drips gold, mint scents the morning,
Cardinal-flowers flame a scarlet warning:
"Wade on, young mischief, through the shallows now
That will not last forever;
Only too soon must you be learning how
To breast the River."

Spirit

Frances Higginson Savage

ONCE AND FOR ALL

Once, when I was a boy,
Apollo summoned me
To be apprenticed to the endless summer of light and
consciousness
And thus to become and be what poets often have
been,
A shepherd of being, a riding master of being, holding
the sun-god's horses, leading his sheep, training
his eagles,
Directing the constellations to their stations, and to
each grace of place.

But the goat-god, piping and dancing, speaking an
unknown tongue or the language of the
magician,
Sang from the darkness or rose from the underground,
whence arise
Love and love's drunkenness, love and birth, love and
death, love and rebirth

Which are the beginning of the Phoenix festivals, the
tragic plays in celebration of Dionysus,
And in mourning for his drunken and fallen princes,
the singers and sinners, fallen because they are,
in the end,
Drunken with pride, blind by joy.

And I followed Dionysus, forgetting Apollo. I followed
him far too long until I was wrong and
chanted:

"One cannot serve both Gods. One must choose and
lose."

But I was wrong and when I knew how I was wrong
I knew

What, in a way, I had known all along:

This was the new world, here I belonged, here I was
wrong because

Here every tragedy has a happy ending, and any error
may be

A fabulous discovery of America and of the opulence
hidden in the dark depths and glittering heights
of reality.

Kenyon Review

Delmore Schwartz

“AT A SOLEMN MUSICK”

Let the musicians begin,
Let every instrument awaken and instruct us
In love's willing river and love's dear discipline:
We wait, silent, in consent and in the penance
Of patience, awaiting the serene exaltation
Which is the liberation and conclusion of expiation.

Now may the chief musician say:

*“Lust and emulation have dwelt among us
Like barbarous kings: have conquered us:
Have inhabited our hearts: devoured and ravished
—With the savage greed and avarice of fire—
The substance of pity and compassion.”*

Now may all the players play:

*“The river of the morning, the morning of the river
Flow out of the splendor of the tenderness of
surrender!”*

Now may the chief musician say:

“Nothing is more important than summer.”

And now the entire choir shall chant:

*“How often the astonished heart,
Beholding the laurel,
Remembers the dead,
And the enchanted absolute,
Snow's kingdom, sleep's dominion.”*

Then shall the chief musician declare:

“The phoenix is the meaning of the fruit,

Until the dream is knowledge and knowledge is a dream."

And then, once again, the entire choir shall cry out in
unity,

Singing and celebrating love and love's victory,
Ascending and descending the heights of assent,
chanting triumphantly:

"Before the morning was, you were:

Before the snow shone;

And the light sang, and the stone,

Abiding, rode the fulness, or endured the emptiness,

You were; you were alone."

Kenyon Review

Delmore Schwartz

AFFILIATION WITH THE FALL

It is my own innate austerity
That seeks affiliation with the fall;
The doctrine of restraint that governs me
Prefers bare branches patterning a wall.
How else should I be able to explain
My exultation at the summer's close,
That strange commingling of delight and pain
To see the stem revealed that held a rose?
The verdant lushness can be too intense
For minds disposed to discipline and duty.
I revel in the harsher recompense
Of trees dismantled to their basic beauty.
Perhaps it is because my heart perceives
A part of me in limbs stripped clean of leaves.

The Lyric

Marilyn Eynon Scott

EXERCISE IN IDOLATRY

When in the audience of love's cold eyes
I worship to a goddess wrought of steel
And hide the sallies angry thoughts devise
While she examines what my songs reveal
And holds me fixed within her emerald stare,
The bitter words inside my mind belie
The sweetness of my verse but never dare
To reach my lips—so well enslaved am I.
Though I have brought her love impaled on rhyme
And burnt my genius for her iron heart
(I, pagan in this church revering time,
She, idol with no use for sacrificial art)
Beneath the lyric of my sweet refrains
A rage dissembles midst a clink of chains.

New York Times

Jules Siegel

SEASALTER

Past Romney and past Tankerton
Lapses the sulking sea,
Complaining to the longshoremen
Of lost felicity.

When rain pushed her conclusions
Beyond the bound of sense
And Noah rode the tidal world
In sole magnificence,

Damp hills felt her caresses;
She wandered where she would,
Making of human beauties
Her soft and ugly food.

Her arms embrace the headland still,
But cannot reach above
Where, seeking niggard pastures,
The Nomad King of love

Drives on his parched and angry herd
From hill to brackened hill,
Tired of it all, driven by hunger
Onward, onward still

Till round his bruised and dusty feet
The dry land falls away,
And scalding eyes exhaust their lust
Where Ocean drowns the day.

Staring to sea from Quantockshead
I saw the Nomad King,
Hunger forgotten in delight.
But while Bicknoller slept, all night
I heard a distant rumour:
The sea remembering.

Poetry (Chicago)

Francis Sparshott

HUCK FINN (SOMEWHAT TIDIED UP) IS BANISHED TO THE BACK SHELVES

Thank you, Sam Clemens, for your little fable.
We make as much allowance as we can

for time; and as a crude Samaritan
you did some good to lay it on the table
that spite of dirt, chains, tar and feathers, man
is man, or isn't, as his soul declares—
soul, that speaks any tongue or accent, wears
full choice of colors. Well, as much as we're able
we thank you, Sam Clemens, for your little fable.

Thank you, Sam Clemens, but the times have changed:
we need a grander affirmation now:
history a la Harriet Beecher Stowe,
in which no race was ever so estranged
it cost a boy his few truths to learn how
a two-legged barnyard beast with its blocked tongue
could cry the only manly sense among
its masters. Words of praise can be arranged
to thank you, Sam Clemens, but the times have
changed.

Saturday Review

George Starbuck

PROGNOSIS

Petrarch watched a plague: it took
Half of Europe, says my book.
Now of course they've found the rat;
Anyway, half lived—and yet

Fear of missiles, thick and vague,
Spreads its palsy like a plague;
Fear breeds fear; the insecure
Vaccinate themselves—with fear.

Flesh, that to uranium
Seems a power-vacuum,
Cannot linger uncommitted:
Sooner, later, all are pitted.

Saved from Mao and Molotov,
Millions come away from suave
Doctor Dulles, Doctor Nixon,
Rabid with their anti-toxin.

Millions more on Khrushchev's serum,
Rage with fear of those that fear them:
Shadows prowl at every back;
All precaution is attack.

Still, the books will skimp it, if
Here and there a spasm of life
Raises on the ruins one
Knowing cross of bone on bone.

Schoolboy Chaucer feared the bog,
Fled from shapes of mist and fog.
We can grin and blame the flea:
Air, we know, kills boundlessly.

New Republic

George Starbuck

THE SIZE OF TRUTH

Plumbing the depths of space
By a ferrule made of light

Or gauging the length of time
By an atom's aging might
Are easier tasks for men
Than measuring the sovereign height
Where wisdom holds the scales
And weighs the truth in flight.

The world of the senses asks
Five ways to seek and find
But the world of the spirit hides
In the shadows of the mind
Which is larger than all the dark
That leaves the stars behind;
But truth has a second sight
To split the blackest rind.

The voice of light is slow
To tell the death of a star,
Slower than the world of truth
As it travels near or far
With the instancy of love
And flows through the calendar
Where time is a broken wheel
And space is an empty jar.

Spirit

A. M. Sullivan

DREAM AUCTION

The burdened cedars climb the moonswept hill,
Pack peddlers dragging shadows up the grade;
Theirs is an ancient journey, dreams their trade

To one who stares across the window sill
Opening an eye to see them standing still,
Blinking again to count them on parade,
Going to market through the dim arcade
To join the bidding of the whip-poor-will.

The bullfrog lays his caution on the vendor,
Deep in his throat he murmurs many sums
For those who barter loudest for the splendor
Of silver falling amid the roll of drums
From little ponds while borrower and lender
Bicker and bargain till the morning comes.

Spirit

A. M. Sullivan

DENIAL

Lonely they are who shape cold words together
On agony's anvil where there is no sound,
Only thought writhing as the hammers pound
Anger and pride into a galling tether
That will not rust or break in any weather,
A subtle chain that weaves its spell around
The tongues of men, while wisdom slips unbound
And takes to wing upon a hidden feather.

Words link to words until the captors seize
Their souls for ransom in the mind's slow treason
Asking high tribute from the days of doubt.
Brave they are, who with unbending knees
Light candles at the empty shrine of reason
And fools they are, to watch them gutter out.

Spirit

A. M. Sullivan

BALLAD OF THE BULBS

Abner asked three meals a day,
His wife demanded more,
She asked six tulips in a plot
Beside the kitchen door.

Abner never met the spring
Without a bitter look
At six tall flowers burning red
Below the window nook.

He ploughed the meadow, planted corn
And built the haycock high,
But grudged his wife her plot of earth
With a miser's measuring eye.

He praised her sampler in the hall,
Her rug upon the stair.
He praised her butter from the churn,
Her jellies at the Fair,

But never a kindly word he gave
For the tulips standing up
With beauty for the Maytime
In a deep and ruby cup.

"Things to grow are the things to eat,"
He murmured like a prayer,
Until one Spring he looked and laughed
For the tulip bed was bare.

"You've got good sense, good wife," said he,
"To give your bulbs away."

"To none I gave my bulbs," said she,
"Except to you this day.

"Beauty is food I feasted on
And I shall heap your bowl
With all the beauty I have craved
Out of a miser's dole."

Abner asked three meals, that's all.
And he will ask no more.
He ate six poisoned tulip bulbs
That bloomed beside his door.

Voices

A. M. Sullivan

EAST RIVER, FEBRUARY

This gray day—the wet
pavement of the esplanade,
the flat river's fabric

dusty in fog,
forms of the other shore,
serried docks, blunt-hafted

tankers in their berths
drawn in chalk
the tops rubbed out—

a horizontal composition
with no depth, in three
planes of doubtful reflection.

The air has the most
shine: pins of rain stuck
in muslin, unable to fall

between dull sky
and turtle-colored water, I
am the only upright, a stroke

weighting the ground-cloth—
not by vividness or mass,
by actuality of black.

Saturday Review

May Swenson

ROBERTA IN THE SNOW

Roberta plays in her first snow.
She thinks it is a gift to her,
Just like the red beret—
She's four years old today.
So surely does Roberta know;
So purely will a child infer!

On her dark lashes falls one flake—
A flower of ice, a crystal rose,
A feather from the wing
Of some unearthly thing,
A star that only angels make;
All this Roberta says she knows.

But for an instant her bright face
Is clouded with bewilderment—

(The Col d'Argentieres,
High Alpine passage where
An army perished in the ice
The way great Hannibal once went;

The bloody snows of Vilna and
The Beresina's headlong fear)
Roberta's crystal flake
Has left upon her cheek,
For all she cannot understand,
A single, universal tear.

Virginia Quarterly Review *Emma Gray Trigg*

TO PRUE, BELOW SLEEP

Up from some tilt-towered slumber
Doom-deep down under
Your captured bed,
You climbed and clung to me and fled,
Fighting a rear-guard action from your shoulder,
Pelting spent syllables upon my head.

But when I held you, trembling with your tremor,
Shaken by your shaking, and shook you, pled
That I alone was voice and face and danger,
You slanted off in answer to a stranger,
And, dragging your chains behind you, you obeyed.

Night after night you call me, night after night
I knot the words you know me by and grope
Over the edge of your bottomless bed, and look

Down through the spiral dark for the flash and smoke,
And hark for the silence after the crack and shriek,
And feel for the suck and swirl about you breathing;
Yet find no grip at your finger tip,
No foot at your feet,
No blood upon your bleeding.

So, if and when, we two again have met,
Plotted by chance again on the same graph,
I have marked the point that you expect,
Have asked what sort of shaft or ladder led
Down to what smoking city through your bed.
"None" (for you are a truthful child), you said.

Atlantic Monthly

Alberta T. Turner

PORTRAIT

My lady, it will take me suns and moons
To paint in verse what I admire in you,
And certainly I cannot have you pose
For if you did my thoughts would wander far
In quest of much more tender shades of dawn
With which to draw your eyes. I would then have
To trace a wave that does not flow to be
Another wave or that, if calm, still holds
Its white elusiveness without becoming
The color of the shore on which it falls:
For only thus I might attempt to limn
The softness of your hands and keep them free
From this injustice that we call our art.
Both eyes and hands are difficult to sketch

For one should know what they have seen and done
To capture all their beauty, formed of skies
And sunsets and past tears, and to detect
Their secret pulse that now is what it is
Because of each bud touched, of all thorns felt.
And you would smile as all the heavens smile
At us who think this flash of life our own.
I would then be reminded of your mouth
And you would have to wait more suns and moons,
For one must dare to compromise with God.
If I should paint your lips with hues of fire,
I would not know of flames that do not harm
And, giving death, you would be mortal, too;
And if I paint them with a touch of grief
I shall no longer understand God's love
That dooms to darkness what is love and light
And gives my part of tears, my taste of death
To one who came of deathless happiness.
My lady, it would cost me faith and heaven
To paint your face—so I will not. I now
Shall be alone for, once, in bygone days,
I saw, along the desert sand, a flower
Which lives above comparison of spring.

Spirit

Joseph Tusiani

THE CONFRONTATION

Both, in the magic, velvet aftermath
That fills the canyon in the sunset's wake:
I standing breathless on the path,
She all a-quiver in the brake.

Humid and dark, four eyes in that long gaze,
Though mine held firm against the rising tear,
Nor did hers move when through the haze
I whispered: "Oh, you dear, you dear!"

So bound, we shared our femininity,
I, burdened at the heart with all I know;
What was it that she asked of me,
The innocent, the untried doe?

Scarcely three yards between us where we stood,
And neither dared to make the distance less;
I yearned to seal our sisterhood
Albeit with but one caress.

Yet it was I who passed and left here there
And, looking back, perceived she did not move:
Then, facing night, my heart dropped care
Since fear, for once, was quelled by Love.

The Lyric

Jean Starr Untermeyer

NOT FROM THE ANIMAL

Saint Mark wooed his lion,
To him had recourse,
When insight would tire,
For chapter and verse.

And Blake loved to spy on
The tiger and lamb;
The former for fire,
The latter for calm.

My eros must try on
A shape that is plain
When me he'd inspire:
The brisk porcupine.

O writers, why vie on
With totems, tabus:
Within, your desire
Waits, yearning for use.

The Lyric

Jean Starr Untermeyer

CALIGULA'S DREAM

Insomnia was his worst torment. Three hours a night of fitful sleep was all that he ever got, and even then terrifying visions would haunt him—once, for instance, he dreamed that he had a conversation with the Mediterranean Sea. —Suetonius

Of gold the bread on which he banqueted
Where pimps in silk and pearls dissolved in wine
Were standard fare. The monster's marble head
Had many antic veins, being divine.

At war, he massed his men upon the beach
And bawled the coward's order, "Gather shells!"
He stooped, in need of prisoners, to teach
The German tongue to prostituted Gauls.

Bald young, broad-browed and, for his era, tall,
In peace he proved incestuous and queer,
And spent long hours in the Capitol
Exchanging compliments with Jupiter.

He stalled his horse in ivory, and displayed
His wife undressed to friends, and liked to view
Eviscerations and the dance, and made
Poor whores supply imperial revenue.

Perhaps—to plead—the boy had heard how when
They took his noble father from the pyre
And found a section unconsumed, the men
Suspicioned: "Poisoned hearts resist the fire."

It was as water that his vision came,
At any rate—more murderous than he,
More wanton, uglier, of wider fame,
Unsleeping also, multi-sexed, the Sea.

It told him, "Little Boots, you cannot sin
Enough; you speak a language, though you rave.
The actual things at home beneath my skin
Out-horrrify the vilest hopes you have.

I am the king. The maddest man is doomed
To sing beneath my bellow, loud Creation."
Caligula, the pits of logic plumbed,
Awoke, and toppled toward assassination.

The Commonweal

John Updike

DUNCE'S SONG

Where is the bell, the horn,
I hear as I go by,

Go by the invisible wall
That holds up half the sky,
The sky whose other half
Falls down like gold wheat chaff
And sprinkles all the air,
And powders my dull hair?
So people cry and cry:
Who wears that glittery crown,
That crown? And I say I.
Oh, what a falling down
As I go by, go by.

Harper's Magazine

Mark Van Doren

DEPARTURE: SEPTEMBER

He has driven away, and with him has gone
More even than summer, though that is as much
As I look for this morning; and see on the lawn—
Look, leaves fallen, and dry to the touch.

More than warm green, than lazy long growth,
Went down the cool hill with him only last night.
I am here, he is there: it is each, it is both
Things sicken me now with their secret delight;

As if it were good to devour an old heart;
As if it were pleasure to leave in its place
A dry, small mind whose meagerest art
Will be to remember his hands and his face:

How he did this, and how he said that,
And how he was angry for part of one day;
As if it were better to sit where he sat
Than to have him still here and deciding to stay.

Harper's Magazine

Mark Van Doren

CHILDREN OF LILITH

Now tell me, Villon, where is he
Your Sopor, lord of Nero's lyre,
Who watched with languid ecstasy
The seven hills grown red with fire?
And he whose madness choked the hall
With roses and made night of day?
Rome's rulers for an interval,
Its boyish Caesars, where are they?

Where is that city by the Nile,
Reared by an emperor's bronze distress
When the enamoured crocodile
Clawed the Bithynian's loveliness?
The ardent pool whose listening trees
Heard Echo's voice die far away?
Narcissus, Hylas, Charmides,
O brother Villon, where are they?

Say where the young disciple roved
When the Messiah's blood was spilt?
None knows; for he whom Jesus loved
Was not the rock on which He built.

And tell me where is Gaveston,
The second Edward's dear dismay?
And Shakespeare's love, and Jonathan,
O brother Villon, where are they?

Made—for what end?—by God's great hand,
Frail, enigmatic shapes, they dwell
In some fantastic borderland,
But on the hitherside of hell.
Children of Lilith, each a sprite,
Yet wrought like us of Adam's clay;
And when they haunt us in the night
What, brother Villon, shall we say?

George Sylvester Viereck
Wisconsin Poetry Magazine

DEBATE: QUESTION, QUARRY, DREAM

Asking what, asking what?—all a boy's afternoon,
Squatting in the canebrake where the muskrat will
come.

Muskrat, muskrat, please now, please, come soon.
He comes, stares, goes, lets the question resume.
He has taken whatever answer may be down to his
mud-burrow gloom.

Seeking what, seeking what?—foot soft in cedar shade.
Was that a deer-flag white past dead-fall and fern?
No, but by bluffside lurk powers, and in fern-glade,
Tall presences, standing all night, like white fox-fire,
burn.

The small fox lays his head in your hand now and
weeps that you go, not to return.

Dreaming what, dreaming what?—lying on the hill at
twilight,
Air-stillness stirred only by moth-wing, and last stain
of sun
Fading to moth-sky, blood-red to moth-white and
starlight,
And Time leans down to kiss the heart's ambition,
While far away, before moonrise, come the town lights,
one by one.

Long since that time I have walked night streets, heel-
iron
Clicking the stone, and in dark in windows have
stared.
Question, quarry, dream—I have vented my ire on
My own heart that, ignorant and untoward,
Yearns for an absolute that Time would, I thought,
have prepared,

But has not yet. Well, let us then debate
The issue. But under a tight roof, clutching a toy,
My son now sleeps, and when the hour grows late,
I shall go forth where the cold constellations deploy
And lift up my eyes to consider more strictly the
appalling logic of joy.

Yale Review

Robert Penn Warren

CREDO

If He were nowhere I would find Him still.
If He were nothing, He would then be all.
If He should leave me, I would live beside Him,
If He denied me, I'd accept His call.

He could be nameless if there were no tongue.
He could be deaf, if none had ever sung.
He might be myth created to deceive,
But I am no one if I disbelieve.

Spirit

Livingston Welch

MINOR REALISM FOR A MAJOR POET

*Owls that cry in the night . . .
Indeed their voice is enchanting,
With a far-away roll and fall. . . .
Actually make their hoots
To petrify as it were
And scare stiff small animals. . . .*

*We must go elsewhere
Than the cry of the hoot owl,
Somewhere beyond realism,
For the tone of the poetical.
(Richard Eberhart)*

*Don't go elsewhere.
You have it right, right there,
Only just not exactly.*

The owl hunts by ear
And little animals, still,
Whether in sleep or fear
But starve him strictly.
He hunts as dumb as death.
Hoot? He'd not breathe
If he could kill and hold his breath.

But if love's poetical
And your fine poems figure it that way,
The plainest way of all, —
Don't go, Dick, stay—
(*Somewhere beyond realism,*
Certainly) with the real:
With the voices enchanting,
The voices, as you say,
Faraway roll and fall
Of owls in love at play.

The Nation

Marie de L. Welch

THE GARDENER

Father, whom I knew well for forty years
Yet never knew, I have come to know you now—
In age, made good at last those old arrears.

Though time, that snows the hair and lines the brow,
Has equalled us, it was not time alone
That brought me to the knowledge I here avow.

Some profound divination of your own,
In all the natural effects you sought
Planted a secret that is now made known.

These woodland ways, with your heart's labor bought,
Trees that you nurtured, gardens that you planned,
Surround me here, mute symbols of your thought.

Your meaning beckons me on every hand,
Grave aisles and vistas, in their silence, speak
A language which I now can understand.

In all you did, as in yourself, unique—
Servant of beauty, whom I seek to know,
Discovering here the clue to what I seek.

When down the nave of your great elms I go
That soar their Gothic arches where the sky,
Nevertheless, with all its stars will show,

Or when the moon of summer, riding high,
Spills through the leaves her light from far away,
I feel we share the secret, you and I.

All these you loved and left. We may not stay
Long with the joy our hearts are set upon:
This is a thing that here you tried to say.

The night has fallen; the day's work is done;
Your groves, your lawns, the passion of this place,
Cry out your love of them—but you are gone.

O father, whom I may no more embrace
In childish fervor, but, standing far apart,
Look on your spirit rather than your face,

Time now has touched me also, and my heart
Has learned a sadness that yours earlier knew,
Who labored here, though with the greater art.

The truth is on me now that was with you:
How life is sweet, even its very pain,
The years how fleeting and the days how few.

Truly, your labors have not been in vain;
These woods, these walks, these gardens—everywhere
I look, the glories of your love remain.

Therefore, for you, now beyond praise or prayer,
Before the night falls that shall make us one,
In which neither of us will know or care,

This kiss, father, from him who was your son.

The New Yorker

John Hall Wheelock

SONG ON REACHING SEVENTY

Shall not a man sing as the night comes on?
He would be braver than that bird
Which shrieks for terror and is gone
Into the gathering dark, and he has heard
Often, at evening's hush,
Upon some towering sunset bough
A belated thrush
Lift up his heart against the menacing night,
Till silence covered all. Oh, now

Before the coming of a greater night
How bitterly sweet and dear
All things have grown! How shall we bear the brunt,
The fury and joy, of every sound and sight,
Now almost cruelly fierce with all delight:
The clouds of dawn that blunt
The spearhead of the sun; the clouds that stand,
Raging with light, around his burial;
The rain-pocked pool
At the wood's edge; a bat's skittering flight
Over the sunset-colored land;
Or, heard toward morning, the cock pheasant's call!
Oh, every sight and sound
Has meaning now! Now, also, love has laid
Upon us her old chains of tenderness,
So that to think of the beloved one,
Love is so great, is to be half afraid—
It is like looking at the sun,
That blinds the eye with truth.
Yet longing remains unstilled,
Age will look into the face of youth
With longing, over a gulf not to be crossed.
Oh, joy that is almost pain, pain that is joy,
Unimaginable to the younger man or boy—
Nothing is quite fulfilled,
Nothing is lost;
But all is multiplied, till the heart almost
Aches with its burden: there and here
Become as one, the present and the past;
The dead, who were content to lie
Far from us, have consented to draw near—
We are thronged with memories,
Move amid two societies,

And learn at last
The dead are the only ones who never die.

Great night, hold back
A little longer yet your mountainous, black
Waters of darkness from this shore,
This island garden, this paradisal spot,
The haunt of love and pain,
Which we must leave, whether we would or not,
And where we shall not come again.
More time—oh, but a little more,
Till, stretched to the limits of being, the taut heart
 break,
Bursting the bonds of breath,
Shattering the wall
Between us and our world, and we awake
Out of the dream of self into the truth of all,
The price for which is death.

John Hall Wheelock
The Times Literary Supplement (London)

CITY SPRING

Spring by the calendar! Dripping blowing awnings,
Men with their heads down against the sudden gale,
Puddles on the sidewalk, thick clouds above us,
Little dogs on leashes, each with a drooping tail;
Raindrops trailing down the gray tall houses,
Tapping our umbrellas with their steady beat . . .
But I saw narcissus—yellow-gold narcissus—
Packed in shining bunches on a cart downstreet!

Spring by the calendar! Stiff florists' windows
Full of prim azaleas all stiff and spread and bright,
Ape-faced stripy orchids that never saw a jungle
Waiting to lie limp along a powdered neck at night;
Bored furry women with tense tiring faces
Hurrying toward heated rooms before the dark
should fall
But I smelled fresh lilac—sturdy country lilac—
Sweet and brave in shabby tins along a brownstone
wall!

Spring by the calendar! We had all forgotten,
City people hurrying to silly things that pass,
None of us remembering that there might be
leaf-buds,
Willows by the water, dragon-flies in grass;
Then I saw forsythia—nodding bright forsythia—
Tied behind a rattling car that came from
Sundaying;
The baby had a tulip, the boy had pussy-willows,
And when I saw their faces I knew that it was
Spring!

Wisconsin Poetry Magazine Margaret Widdemer

TEA ROOMS

Do not ridicule them, the whispering well-groomed
women
Running to fortune-tellers, hurrying to star-readers,
Saying to one another, laughing, "Oh, I discovered

Somebody wonderful this time, some one who really
told me
Something she could not know, and promised things
even better—"

They have taken their prayers away; they have taken
the work of the fireside,
The guardian arms and the pity, the empery and the
quiet,
The pride in the heads of children stairstep against
their aprons,
Their pattern of youth and age (youth for love, age
for peace, heaven for dying).

They hurry to little doors; they nod as they tell each
other,
"There is no promise from God, nor from men—but
perhaps if we listen
To a card or a star or a teacup's promise, (listen,
perhaps they are laughing)
Perhaps it will all come true."
Do not mock them, then. They are brave. See, they
laugh as they enter.

Wisconsin Poetry Magazine Margaret Widdemer

CELADON BOX

There are five pigtailed wise men who talk on my
celadon box.
They have red carved water behind them. They stand
among carved red rocks.

The Chinese wise men are moveless, eternally caught
in the frost
Of an idea newly born to them, long immortal or lost.

As for me, I lift the cover on which the wise men
think
And move through a smoke-hung room where ten
shorthaired people drink;
I offer the box to them all with the cigarettes laid
inside.
The wise men do not care. The world where they live
is wide.

There is room for eternal thought and ephemeral
smoke to blow
In the world they know.

Univ. of Kansas City Review Margaret Widdemer

SOMEONE TALKING TO HIMSELF

Even when first her face,
Younger than any spring,
Older than Pharaoh's grain
And fresh as Phoenix-ashes,
Shadowed under its lashes
Every earthly thing,
There was another place
I saw in a flash of pain:
Off in the fathomless dark
Beyond the verge of love,
I saw blind fishes move,
And under a stone shelf

Rode the recusant shark—
Cold, waiting, himself.

Oh, even when we fell,
Clean as a mountain source,
And barely able to tell
Such ecstasy from grace,
Into the primal bed
And current of our race,
We knew yet must deny
To what we gathered head:
That music turning harsh,
Trees blotting the sky
Above the roaring course
That in the summer's drought
Slowly would peter out
Into a dry marsh.

Love is the greatest mercy—
A volley of the sun
That lashes all with shade
That the first day be mended—
And yet, so soon undone,
It is the lover's curse
Till time be comprehended
And the flawed heart unmade.
What can I do but move
From folly to defeat,
And call that sorrow sweet
That teaches us to see
The final face of love
In what we cannot be?

The New Yorker

• *Richard Wilbur*

LOVES OF THE PUPPETS

Meeting when all the world was in the bud,
Drawn each to each by instinct's wooden face,
These lovers, heedful of the mystic blood,
Fell glassy-eyed into a hot embrace.

April, unready to be so intense,
Marked time while these outstripped the gentle
 weather,
Yielded their natures to insensate sense,
And flew apart the more they came together.

Where did they fly? Why, each through such a storm
As may be conjured in a globe of glass
Drove on the colder as the flesh grew warm,
In breathless haste to be at lust's impasse,

To cross the little bridge and sink to rest
In visions of the snow-occluded house
Where languishes, unfound by any quest,
The perfect, small, asphyxiated spouse.

That blizzard ended, and their eyes grew clear,
And there they lay exhausted yet unsated.
Why did their features run with tear on tear,
Until their looks were individuated?

One peace implies another, and they cried
For want of love as if their souls would crack,
Till in despair of being satisfied
They vowed at least to share each other's lack;

Then maladroitly they embraced once more,
And hollow rang to hollow with a sound
That tuned the brooks more sweetly than before,
And made the birds explode for miles around.

The New Yorker

Richard Wilbur

A BAROQUE WALL-FOUNTAIN IN THE VILLA SCIARRA

Under the bronze crown
Too big for the head of the stone cherub whose feet
A serpent has begun to eat,
Sweet water brims a cockle and braids down

Past spattered mosses, breaks
On the tipped edge of a second shell, and fills
The massive third below. It spills
In threads then from the scalloped rim, and makes

A scrim or summery tent
For a faun-ménage and their familiar goose.
Happy in all that ragged, loose
Collapse of water, its effortless descent

And flatteries of spray,
The stocky god upholds the shell with ease,
Watching, about his shaggy knees,
The goatish innocence of his babes at play;

His fauness all the while
Leans forward, slightly, into a clambering mesh
Of water-lights, her sparkling flesh
In a saecular ecstasy, her blinded smile

Bent on the sand floor
Of the trefoil pool, where ripple-shadows come
And go in swift reticulum,
More addling to the eye than wine, and more

Interminable to thought
Than pleasure's calculus. Yet since this all
Is pleasure, flash, and waterfall,
Must it not be too simple? Are we not

More intricately expressed
In the plain fountains that Maderna set
Before St. Peter's—the main jet
Struggling aloft until it seems at rest

In the act of rising, until
The very wish of water is reversed,
That heaviness borne up to burst
In a clear, high, cavorting head, to fill

With blaze, and then in gauze
Delays, in a gnatlike shimmering, in a fine
Illumined vision of itself, decline,
And patter on the stones its own applause?

If that is what men are,
Or should be, if those water-saints display
The pattern of our *areté*,
What of these showered fauns in their bizarre,

Spangled, and plunging house?
They are at rest in fulness of desire
For what is given, they do not tire
Of the smart of the sun, the pleasant water-douse

And riddled pool below,
Reproving our disgust and our ennui
With humble insatiety.
Francis, perhaps, who lay in sister snow

Before the wealthy gate
Freezing and praising, might have seen in this
No trifle, but a shade of bliss—
That place of tolerable flowers, that state

As near and far as grass,
Where eyes become the sunlight, and the hand
Is worthy of water: the dreamt land
Toward which all hungers leap, all pleasures pass.

The New Yorker

Richard Wilbur

A BRUEGHEL NATIVITY

Peter Brueghel, the elder, painted
a Nativity, painted a Baby
new born!
among the words.

Armed men,
savagely armed men
armed with pikes,
halberds and swords

whispering men with averted faces
got to the heart

of the matter
as they talked to the pot-bellied
graybeard (center)
the butt of their comments,
looking askance, showing their
amazement at the scene,
features like the more stupid
German soldiers of the late
war

—but the Baby (as from an
illustrated catalogue
in colors) lies naked on his Mother's
knees

—it is a scene, authentic enough, to be witnessed frequently among the poor (I salute the man Brueghel who painted what he saw—

many times no doubt
among his own kids but not of course
in this setting

The crowned and mitred heads
of the 3 men, one of them black,
who had come, obviously from afar
(highwaymen?)
by the rich robes
they had on—offered
to propitiate their gods

Their hands were loaded with gifts
—they had eyes for visions
in those days—and saw,
saw with their proper eyes,
these things
to the envy of the vulgar soldiery

He painted
the bustle of the scene,
the unkempt straggling
hair of the old man in the
middle, his sagging lips

—incredulous
that there was so much fuss
about such a simple thing as a baby
born to an old man
out of a girl and a pretty girl
at that

But the gifts! (works of art,
where could they have picked
them up or more properly
have stolen them?)
—how else to honor
an old man, or a woman?

—the soldiers' ragged clothes,
mouths open,
their knees and feet
broken from 30 years of
war, hard campaigns, their mouths
watering for the feast which
had been provided

Peter Brueghel the artist saw it
from the two sides: the
imagination must be served—
and he served
dispassionately

The Nation

William Carlos Williams

THE SATYRS

. . . or the Satyrs, a
pre-tragic play,
a satyric play!
All plays
were satyric when they were most devout.
Ribald as a Satyr!

Satyrs dancel
all the deformities take wing
Centaurs
leading to the rout of the vocables
in the writings
of Gertrude
Stein—but
you cannot be
an artist
by mere ineptitude
The dream
is in pursuit!
The neat figures of
Paul Klee
fill the canvas

but that
 is not the work
 of a child .
 the cure began, perhaps,
 with the abstraction
 of Arabic art
 Dürer
 with his *Melancholy*
 was aware of it—
 the shattered masonry. Leonardo
 saw it,
 the obsession,
 and ridiculed it
 in *La Gioconda*.
 Bosch's
 congeries of tortured souls and devils
 who prey on them
 fish
 swallowing
 their own entrails
 Freud
 Picasso
 Juan Gris.
 a letter from a friend
 saying:
 For the last
 three nights
 I have slept like a baby
 without
 liquor or dope of any sort!
 we know
 that a stasis

from a crysalis
 has stretched its wings
 like a bull
 or a Minotaur
 or Beethoven
 in the scherzo
 from the Fifth Symphony
 stomped
 his heavy feet
 I saw love
 mounted naked on a horse
 on a swan
 the tail of a fish
 the blood thirsty conger eel
 and laughed
 recalling the Jew
 in the pit
 among his fellows
 when the indifferent chap
 with the machine gun
 was spraying the heap .
 he had not yet been hit
 but smiled
 comforting his companions .
 comforting
 his companions
 Dreams possess me
 and the dance
 of my thoughts
 involving animals
 the blameless beasts

The Nation

William Carlos Williams

THE MEASURE

—learning with age to sleep my life away:
saying .

The measure intervenes, to measure is all we
know

a choice among the measures . . .

the measured dance

“unless the scent of a rose
startle us anew”

Equally laughable
is to assume to know nothing, a
chess game
massively, “materially,” compounded!

Ya ho! ta ho!

We know nothing and can know nothing
but
the dance, to dance to a measure
contrapuntally,
Satyrically, the tragic foot.

The Nation

William Carlos Williams

ICE CREAM

Heat is the first ingredient,
Then, desire, and then, enormous power—
Proof he is the emperor.

Proof! For this the runner has been sent
Against the heights of the Himalayas,
Up, up, up, where he gathers,

Past endurance, unembellished snow;
Gathers, in a straw-lined casket
Wrapped in linen in a wicker basket

Snow, then runs
Down, down, down, across the flints
Of the Himalayas, through the torrents

In his way, panting with the gem
Of snow between his hands; downward
To the lowlands where a slave has poured

A syrup out before the emperor, who waits.
The emperor has gardens of impressive fruit
That ought to cool him. None of it

Will do. He has mulberry, raspberry
And currant bushes. He has peach,
Cherry, lime and lemon trees, which

Give him fruit that makes exquisite
Juice. But everywhere the flies
Buzz, buzz. The empress almost dies

Of boredom, and the emperor of heat.
The empress has a voice that's like the stirring
Of a tiny fruit-fly whirring

In the upper reaches of complaint.
Inside the palace, the parrot's perch is hot.
He shifts his toes and chafes, but is not

Comfortable. Sweet-voiced pages, thrumming lyres
Find the strings are limp. The song
They hoped to make, turns out all wrong.

Because it's hot. Until the runner's
In the palace yard, with bloody feet
And rattling chest. Sweet, oh sweet,

The rasping of those faithful lungs.
The empress is awake; the emperor alert.
Rubies for the runner; physicians for his hurt

Have been commanded. Now, the court
Gathers while the emperor
Exalts the limit of his power.

The breathing heat, and the desire
For a consoling frost or wind
To blow across the badlands of the mind

Define the emperor: that Maharaj,
Perspiring despot of the lowlands goes
To pour his syrup on Himalaya's snows.

The Commonweal

Leonard Wolf

THE HOOKED RUG

Pluck and pull
The dark red wool.
The flames leap up and down.
Her fingers ply the catching hook
till the candle's eye is brown.

The old, the worn,
outgrown, and torn,
she loops up into flowers.
The heart of summer blooms in the hearth
through the dark of the winter hours.

This is the gown
she wore to town
when her breasts were round as a rose,
and these the rags of all her urchins'
caterpillar clothes.

Hook and pull
the mulberry wool
with dark leaves all around.
A man wears brown, a man wears black,
the color of the ground.

A rug is a wreath
that grows beneath
fingers that pluck and pull.
A woman's years are rounded all
in rags of soft red wool.

A garden blooms
in a cold room.
Who knows the heart of his wife
whose fingers pull roses of wool
out of the dark of her life?

Atlantic Monthly

Luke Zilles

ANTHOLOGY OF POEMS
From the Seventeen Previously Published
Braithwaite Anthologies
(1913 - 1929)

To
A. M. SULLIVAN

The dates under these poems refer to the year of the previous Braithaite Anthology of Magazine Verse from which they were taken.

A GULL GOES UP

Gulls when they fly move in a liquid arc;
Still head, and wings that bend above the breast,
Covering the glitter with a cloak of dark,
Gulls fly; so would at last toward balm and rest,
Remembering wings, the desperate leave their earth,
Bear from their earth what there was ruinous-crossed,
Peace from distress, and love from nothing-worth,
Fast at the heart, its jewels of dear cost.

Gulls go up hushed to that entrancing flight,
With never a feather of all the body stirred;
So in an air less rare than longing might
The dream of flying lift a marble bird.
Desire it is that flies; then wings are freight,
That only bear the feathered heart no weight.

1924

Léonie Adams

COUNTRY SUMMER

Now the rich cherry whose sleek wood
And top with silver petals traced
Like a strict box its gems encased,
Has spilt from out that cunning lid,
All in an innocent green round,
Those melting rubies which it hid;
With moss ripe-strawberry-encrusted,
So birds get half, and minds lapse merry
To taste that deep-red lark's-bite berry,
And blackcap-bloom is yellow-dusted.

The wren that thieved it in the eaves
A trailer of the rose could catch
To her poor droopy sloven thatch,
And side by side with the wren's brood,—
O lovely time of beggars' luck—
Opens the quaint and hairy bud.
And full and golden is the yield
Of cows that never have to house,
But all night nibble under boughs,
Or cool their sides in the moist field.

Into the rooms flow meadow airs,
The warm farm-baking smell blows round;
Inside and out and sky and ground
Are much the same; the wishing star,
Hesperus, kind and early-born,
Is risen only finger-far.
All stars stand close in summer air,
And tremble, and look mild as amber;
When wicks are lighted in the chamber
You might say stars were settling there.

Now straightening from the flowery hay,
Down the still light the mowers look;
Or turn, because their dreaming shook,
And they waked half to other days,
When left alone in the yellow stubble,
The rusty-coated mare would graze.
Yet thick the lazy dreams are born;
Another thought can come to mind,
But like the shivering of the wind,
Morning and evening in the corn.

1927

Léonie Adams

PORTRAIT OF ONE DEAD

This is her house. On one side there is darkness,
On one side there is light.
Into the darkness you may lift your lanterns
O, any number—it will still be night.
And there are echoing stairs to lead you downward
To long sonorous halls.
And here is spring forever at these windows
With roses on the walls.

This is her room. On one side there is music—
On one side not a sound.
At one step she could move from love to silence,
Feel myriad darkness coiling round.
And here are balconies from which she heard you,
Your steady footstep on the stair.
And here the glass in which she saw your shadow
As she unbound her hair.

Here is the room—with ghostly walls dissolving—
The twilight room in which she called you “lover”;
And the floorless room in which she called you
“friend.”

So many times, in doubt, she ran between them!—
Through windy corridors of darkening end.

Here she could stand with one dim light above her
And hear far music, like a sea in caverns,
Beating away at hollowed walls of stone.
And here, in a roofless room when it was raining,
She bore the patient sorrow of rain alone.

Your words were walls which suddenly froze around
her.

Your words were windows—large enough for
moonlight,

Too small to let her through.

Your letters—fragrant cloisters faint with music.

The music that assuaged her there was you.

How many times she heard your step ascending

Yet never saw your face!

She heard them turn again, ring slowly fainter,

Till silence swept the place.

Why had you gone? . . . The door, perhaps,
mistaken . . .

You would go elsewhere. The deep walls were shaken.

A certain rose-leaf—sent without intention—

Became, with time, a woven web of fire—

She wore it, and was warm.

A certain hurried glance, let fall at parting,

Became, with time, the flashings of a storm.

Yet there was nothing asked, no hint to tell you

Of secret idols carved in secret chambers

From all you did and said.

Nothing was done, until at last she knew you.

Nothing was known till somehow she was dead.

How did she die?—You say she died of poison.

Simple and swift. And much to be regretted.

You did not see her pass

So many thousand times from light to darkness,

Pausing so many times before her glass;

You did not see how many times she hurried
To lean from certain windows, vainly hoping,
Passionate still for beauty, remembered spring.
You did not know how long she clung to music,
You did not hear her sing.

Did she, then, make her choice, and step out bravely
From sound to silence—close, herself, those windows?
Or was it true, instead,
That darkness moved,—for once,—and so possessed
her? . . .

We'll never know, you say, for she is dead.

1919

Conrad Aiken

EPILOGUE

Children of dust, astray among the suns,
Children of the earth, adrift upon the night,
Who have shaken the pageant of old gods and
thrones,
And know them crushed and dead and lost to sight,
What is there in our darkness or our light
To linger in prose or claim a singing breath
Save the curt history of life isled in death?—

Life climbing blind through sunlight desolate
Upon this saddest satellite of stars,
Fearless and steadfast, holding toward the fate
Of men and their little earth and sorrow-scars,
When the broken ikons of fallen avatars,
With grief and desire, long war and death and crime,
Storm headlong roaring downward throughout time.

Standing erect, the sea-wind in our faces,
We may look out across the whirl of spheres
And falling flames that haunt cold interspaces
Reverberating empty to our ears,
Take our fresh gust of beauty out of the years,
And go, unanswered, quit of questionings,
To mix our dust with dust of slaves and kings.

1925

Maxwell Anderson

SOMEWHERE A LONELY BIRD

Somewhere a lonely bird makes incoherence lovelier
Than song of knitted gold:
O I have never heard
Slim water beating in a white-birch thicket
Or deftly-syllabled singing bird
So frail, so fugitive, so uncontrolled!

I will not speak, nor with the shadow of my listening
Affront your loneliness;
Let me the rather go
To mine, the agony of stammered words
Your wild dark throat can hardly guess,
Your wild dark music never, never know.

1922

Joseph Auslander

FORGET!

Let your anchor go whinnying down; it should strike
Deep into some merman's pearl-assaulted skull;

Or—if you like—

A nereid's throat white as death and as beautiful,
A nereid's hair streaked weed green, rust gold where
pike

And inquisitive shark teeth pull.

Forget home and the half-friends; forget the soft
mouth

Syllabbling lovely treacheries; forget the hollow words,
The dust, the drouth—

Everything! Go with the sulphur wings and the
sapphire birds

And the cream curves of the great gulls screaming
south

And the whales in wallowing herds!

Forget! Let nothing make you remember; allow
No pale intrigue of roseleaf dust, no pressed clover;
Let no sound now

Haunt your brain with the old crushed cry of the
lover;

Forget you ever touched a cool skin, a quiet brow—
Let your anchor go over!

1924

Joseph Auslander

HISTORIA AMORIS MEA

I

Now the trees are leoparded
Autumnally,

Now from every tree
The spotted leaves are sped
And gauntleted
Between the winds that whip the cormorant shivering
out to sea.

Where are you, child of the blowing hair and the
sea-lit eyes?
For the water is awake,
And the wild geese are plangent over the lake,
And the heron cries;

Where are you, child of the laughing hands and the
look of stars?
For a tall ship is feeling her way in,
And the long water leans against her spars—
Where are you, child of the lapping tide and the
moondrift scudding thin?

I have wandered to and fro
Where the banks of osier blow,
Through the weeds
And river-reeds
Where the lunging cattle low,
I have followed you and called you but you did not
know.

Swift and soft as cloud-glamour valleying the grass,
So swift, so soft you pass;
Like windlight
Rippling white
Over barley whitening,
Like a wing

Dropping slants of shadow brightening
Down from leaf to leaf, so
Swift and soft
You spring aloft . . .
I have followed you and called you but you did not
know.

There was a pond lilies to oblivion,
And here I used to look for you, hair looped low,
And here I used to find you, dusty with the
snapdragon—
And that was years ago.

You cried out, Spring! before the hepatica,
You danced a snowdrop at the heels of March,
I caught your laughter in the honey-pale forsythia,
The plummy ripple of the larch.

Blush-white apple blossom-snow you were,
With a marigold moon drawn windy through your
hair
And the larkspur light in your eyes and the stir
Of stars in your voice everywhere.

Your glad bare feet sang a lilted carelessness
To the morning dark at the roots of clover,
A shy rain murmured in the rustle of your dress—
And now all that is over.

All the dulcet corn is gathered together
Drowsily, drowsily;
Under the gossipy slow gold weather
All the dulcet corn is gathered together,

And the stubble streams off, bronze and heather,
Down to the sea.

The kine no longer wrench the lush swamp-grasses,
Flicking insistent flies;
A hiss of scarlet wings—and summer passes:
The kine no longer wrench the lush swamp-grasses;
August her final gleaming squadron masses,
Crumples, and dies.

O for your long halloo across the clover,
Your swimming dawn of hair,
All the blind brave delight for ever over—
O for your long halloo across the clover! . . .
But now an ancient ghastly fellow-rover
Finds you more fair.

And therefore, Death—Fist upon hawk and hare,
Foot on the ant's brief tower, Hand on the bird
That pivots over a spinning jet of air,
Treading his tiny whirlpool—let my word
Soften the iron synod of despair.

Be gentle, Death, because of her frail hands
That fluttered wistfully the tremor of wings:
Friendless, alone she stands,
Troubled with unfamiliar things,
The strange new toys a cheated childhood brings.

We learn the face of Death as we grow old,
Each hollow and the habit of the eyes;
The dank palm seems less cold
With frequent pressure; and surprise
Becomes a dead thing when this body dies.

But to be seized when life was at the leap,
Broken off, ardent, lonely, blossomless,
And laid away to sleep
In arms of terrible caress . . .
Death, Death, have pity on her gentleness! . . .

And you are gone, and yet the blue air stands
Warm, and the night leans listening where your feet
Pressed the thick grasses to a long heartbeat
That hoards its memory; and where your hands
Looped a wind yellow with moon across that larch
Until the steep black streamers furrowed green
On the tossed light, the woodland gathers keen,
The stirring pines grow restless for the march.

Come like a clouded sunrise from the sea,
Your eyelids under rain-dusk, lest you burst
The vanguard of desire too suddenly,
Drowning the spirit while it cries, "I thirst!"
Come like the pallid hush anemones keep,
And let me near the shimmering fringe of sleep.

II.

There came to me in agony of sleep
A dream emerging from the depth of sleep
Delicately, like a star in water,
Frail as the breath of fishes when they creep
Through cool prismatic valleys of green water.

I dreamed of light across a swarthy wood
Rallying in gulfs of thinnest gold:
And there was one that stood

Where the light poured together in a flood
And made for her a lit threshold;
And she gave me for sustenance the old
Stained crucifix of solitude.

The crucifix! Triumphant crucifix!
O bright evangel to the spirit groveling,
Hacked by its own despair! Swift sinewing
To the bewildered spirit's broken wing!
I have seen a soldier with two little sticks
Crossed tightly in his stiffening fingers give
Himself the extreme unction, and so pass
Beyond the chasmed grass,
Beyond the dripping dark morass,
Unspeakably at peace, renunciative
Of life, and, dying once, for ever live;
And I have seen you on an alien cliff
Clinging by the rude talons of a dim hieroglyph;
And I have seen you, builded out of bricks,
Hasty, abrupt, and stiff,
Somehow made beautiful with continued touch
Of hands; and I have seen you clutch
Death by the hair and draw him back
Even when all was charnel black
And the smell of the yawning pit hung in the air!

O crucifix! O my deliverer!
When from her arms I took my martyrdom,
And the intolerable white glory held me numb,
Only to make me sing the tenderer
Because of her,
I embraced my gleaming chains,
I kissed the chrismed stains,

With their exalted courage through my veins
I became voice and desire, servant and song-maker.

Beauty throbbing at her wrist
Made me beauty's melodist,
And all lovely things that were:
Daffodil and lavender,
Wistful pallor of the plum,
Blossoms of the trillium
In the dusk wood places,
Lilies anchored to the dawn,
Wings and words and faces—
All that breathed the stir
Of her love seemed lovelier.
And now that she is gone
I know these look for her and cry out things
I cannot hear;
Something has been withdrawn,
Plucked from the thwarted breast of lonely Springs,
Something that breathes and haunts the flying
 footsteps of the year.

Shadowless through thick and drowsy wheat,
And through the grasses indolent with heat,
In sunlight shuddering like a pulse's beat
Poises the fugitive glory of your feet.
Always you will escape me, flashing dream, but I
Shall clasp a phantom that can never fly,
Hold you in every tender thought
At gloaming-stealth; in darkness nerved with prayer,
When the grave dedicated air
By love's humility and tears and strength is wrought
Into a whispered step upon the stair,

You will be there:

And I shall feel, touched, startled, made aware,
Another warmth than mine and other lips
Moving with mine, and from intangible fingertips
Pressed close in white petition such despair
As only one that lives not may declare,
One, only, bear;
And I shall feel when I rise up the golden
 shiver of hair
Everywhere.

Stars and the starlight on the corn,
And the whirring nightjars,
And the new moon dips a dewy horn
Among the stars.

Earth is turning in her sleep,
And the sea,
And the ancient ghosts of murmur creep
From tree to tree.

Your shadow stirring restlessly
Calls me and calls,
And I hear by the side of me
Your hushed footfalls.

O Death! O Love!

You

Who found my spirit hawk-hooded
And slit the bandage
And unsealed me!
When March builds a soft fire in the crocus
And April quenches it with leaning rain;

When the little lime-flowers fall
Hesitatingly
Like children adventuring slumber,
And the freckled butterfly
Light as dream in amber
Hovers on the breath of the wild harebell;
When burnished flies
Twang the midday
In thin consonants;
Before the storm
When the barred electric clouds
Are tigers arched and purring at the stars,
And when the lightning
Rocks across the sky,
And black moths blunder
Blurring the window-pane with frantic dust,
And a cool silver silence treads on rain;
When the autumnal twilight
Is furtive with leaves
Guttering, scuffling
Like candles in a draught,
And mellow cones
In spills of twisted orange
Tumble gorgeously,
And pines,
Bronzed and lank,
On a northeast hill
Go marching dark against the moon;
Deep in the resonant orchestral nights
Of December
When fields of frost
Burn intense with one enormous thought,
And stealthy violet shadows

Move like an exhalation
Over the snow—
As one that shatters moonlight
And pierces a rumour of stars
I have found you
Ambushed
In beauty!

Your rapture-lighted loveliness cries out
Like a vast voice of flame that all I loved
Lives, and I cannot die hearing you call
Everywhere and in every hour, Live!
For always in the early sounds of dawn,
Or the bleak vigil of a rainy night
When crickets file the edge of darkness thin,
Or in the noontide's underdrone of bees—
Always your beauty challenges to life
And to more living: everything you were
Of song and love and laughter and the depth
Of warm gray river-stillness—all has passed
Into the air and earth and the ripe heart
Of hills and in the swinging jasmin bells
And in the fluent shadows on the sea.

After the last song quiet and your hand,
Quiet after the last song;
Peace on the starlit levels where you stand . . .
It is not long.

Now the hills are tired and the trees
Are tired and the solemn forests slumber,
The tides of the immeasurable seas
Slumber.

The pharaoh locust leaves an empty shell,
His fevered recitation has been sung;
The cricket's torn crescendo of farewell
Has been sung.

After the last song quiet and your hand,
Quiet after the last song;
Peace on the starlit levels where you stand . . .
It is not long.

1927

Joseph Auslander

THE BALLAD OF WILLIAM SYCAMORE (1790-1871)

My father, he was a mountaineer,
His fist was a knotty hammer;
He was quick on his feet as a running deer,
And he spoke with a Yankee stammer.

My mother, she was merry and brave,
And so she came to her labor,
With a tall green fir for her doctor grave
And a stream for her comforting neighbor.

And some are wrapped in the linen fine,
And some like a godling's scion;
But I was cradled on twigs of pine
In the skin of a mountain lion.

And some remember a white, starched lap
And a ewer with silver handles;
But I remember a coonskin cap
And the smell of bayberry candles.

The cabin logs, with the bark still rough,
And my mother who laughed at trifles,
And the tall, lank visitors, brown as snuff,
With their long, straight squirrel-rifles.

I can hear them dance, like a foggy song,
Through the deepest one of my slumbers,
The fiddle squeaking the boots along
And my father calling the numbers.

The quick feet shaking the puncheon-floor,
And the fiddle squeaking and squealing,
Till the dried herbs rattled above the door
And the dust went up to the ceiling.

There are children lucky from dawn to dusk,
But never a child so lucky!
For I cut my teeth on "Money Musk"
In the Bloody Ground of Kentucky!

When I grew tall as the Indian corn,
My father had little to lend me,
But he gave me his great, old powder-horn
And his woodman's skill to befriend me.

With a leather shirt to cover my back,
And a redskin nose to unravel
Each forest sign, I carried my pack
As far as a scout could travel.

Till I lost my boyhood and found my wife,
A girl like a Salem clipper!
A woman straight as a hunting-knife
With eyes as bright as the Dipper!

We cleared our camp where the buffalo feed,
Unheard-of streams were our flagons;
And I sowed my sons like the apple-seed
On the trail of the Western wagons.

They were right, tight boys, never sulky or slow,
A fruitful, a goodly muster.
The eldest died at the Alamo.
The youngest fell with Custer.

The letter that told it burned my hand.
Yet we smiled and said, "So be it!"
But I could not live when they fenced the land,
For it broke my heart to see it.

I saddled a red, unbroken colt
And rode him into the day there;
And he threw me down like a thunderbolt
And rolled on me as I lay there.

The hunter's whistle hummed in my ear
As the city-men tried to move me,
And I died in my boots like a pioneer
With the whole wide sky above me.

Now I lie in the heart of the fat, black soil,
Like the seed of a prairie-thistle;

It has washed my bones with honey and oil
And picked them clean as a whistle.

And my youth returns, like the rains of Spring,
And my sons, like the wild-geese flying;
And I lie and hear the meadow-lark sing
And have much content in my dying.

Go play with the towns you have built of blocks,
The towns where you would have bound me!
I sleep in my earth like a tired fox,
And my buffalo have found me.

1923

Stephen Vincent Benét

MAD BLAKE

Blake saw a tree-full of angels at Peckham Rye,
And his hands could lay hold of the tiger's terrible
heart.

Blake knew how deep is Hell, and Heaven how high,
And could build the Universe from one tiny part.

Blake heard the asides of God, as with furrowed brow
He sifts the star-streams between the Then and the
Now,

In vast infant sagacity brooding—an infant's grace
Shining serene on His simple benignant face.

Blake, they say, was mad; and Space's Pandora-box
Loosed its secrets upon him, devils—and angels,
indeed!

I, they say, am sane; but no key of mine unlocks
One lock of one gate where through Heaven's glory
is freed.

And I hark and I hold my breath daylong, yearlong,
Out of comfort and easy dreaming evermore starting
awake,

Yearning beyond all sanity for some echo of that song
Of songs that was sung to the soul of the madman,
Blake!

1916

William Rose Benét

MEMORY

Do not guard this as rich stuff without mark
Closed in a cedarn dark,
Nor lay it down with tragic masks and greaves
Licked by the tongues of leaves.

Nor let it be as eggs under the wings
Of helpless startled things,
Nor encompassed by song, nor any glory
Perverse and transitory.

Rather, like shards and straw upon coarse ground,
Of little worth when found:
Rubble in gardens, it and stones alike,
That any spade may strike.

1922

Louise Bogan

THE ALCHEMIST

I burned my life that I might find
A passion wholly of the mind,
Thought divorced from eye and bone,
Ecstasy come to breath alone.
I broke my life to seek relief
From the flawed light of love and grief.

With mounting beat the utter fire
Charred existence and desire.
It died low, ceased its sudden thresh.
I had found unmysterious flesh —
Not the mind's avid substance—still
Passionate beyond the will.

1922

Louise Bogan

A LYNNMOUTH WIDOW

He was straight and strong, and his eyes were blue
As the summer meeting of sky and sea,
And the ruddy cliffs have a colder hue
Than flushed his cheek when he married me.

We passed the porch where the swallows breed,
We left the little brown church behind,
And I leaned on his arm though I had no need,
Only to feel him so strong and kind.

One thing I never can quite forget—
It grips my throat when I try to pray—

The keen salt smell of a drying net
That hung on the churchyard wall that day.

He would have taken a long, long grave—
A long, long grave, for he stood so tall. . . .
Oh, God—the crash of the breaking wave,
And the smell of the nets on the churchyard wall!

1914

Amelia Josephine Burr

A THRUSH IN THE MOONLIGHT

In came the moon and covered me with wonder,
Touched me and was near me and made me very still.
In came a rush of song, raining as from thunder,
Pouring importunate on my window-sill.
I lowered my head, I hid it, I would not see nor hear—
The bird-song had stricken me, had brought the moon
 too near.
But when I dared to lift my head, night began to fill
With singing in the darkness. And then the thrush
 grew still.
And the moon came in, and silence, on my window-
 sill.

1916

Witter Bynner

WHAT OTHER SHIELD?

What other shield but this against the gods,
Those early gods erected of iron stone,
Those gods with cat's-eyes on a river-bank
Watching a queen believe her beauty her own,
Those gods of golden height among lacquer beams,
Those gods of battle-sword and swollen faces
Those gods of tablets and baptismal streams,
Gods of all the lands and all the races,—
What other shield but this against the gods
Lest they might conquer us and bear us down?
Laughter, laughter, nothing but human laughter,
Till all the gods are gone!

1927

Witter Bynner

A DANCE FOR RAIN

You may never see rain, unless you see
A dance for rain at Cochiti,
Never hear thunder in the air
Unless you hear the thunder there,
Nor know the lightning in the sky
If there's no pole to know it by.
They dipped the pole just as I came,
And I can never be the same
Since those feathers gave my brow
The touch of wind that's on it now,
Bringing over the arid lands
Butterfly gestures from Hopi hands
And holding me, till earth shall fail,

As close to earth as a fox's tail.

I saw them, naked, dance in line
Before the candles of a leafy shrine:
Before a saint in Christian dress
I saw them dance their holiness,
I saw them reminding him all day long
That death is weak and life is strong
And urging the fertile earth to yield
Seed from the loin and seed from the field.

A feather in the hair and a shell at the throat
Were lifting and falling with every note
Of the chorus-voices and the drum,
Calling for the rain to come.
A fox on the back, and shaken on the thigh
Rain-cloth woven from the sky,
And under the knee a turtle-rattle
Clacking with the toes of sheep and cattle—
These were the men, their bodies painted
Earthen, with a white rain slanted;
These were the men, a windy line,
Their elbows green with a growth of pine.
And in among them, close and slow,
Women moved, the way things grow,
With a mesa-tablet on the head
And a little grassy creeping tread
And with sprays of pine moved back and forth,
While the dance of the men blew from the north,
Blew from the south and east and west
Over the field and over the breast.
And the heart was beating in the drum,
Beating for the rain to come.

Dead men, out of earlier lives,
Leaving their graves, leaving their wives,

Were partly flesh and partly clay,
And their heads were corn that was dry and gray.
They were ghosts of men and once again
They were dancing like a ghost of rain;
For the spirits of men, the more they eat,
Have happier hands and lighter feet,
And the better they dance the better they know
How to make corn and children grow.

And so in Cochiti that day
They slowly put the sun away,
And they made a cloud and they made it break
And they made it rain for the children's sake.
And they never stopped the song or the drum
Pounding for the rain to come.

The rain made many suns to shine:
Golden bodies in a line
With leaping feather and swaying pine.
And the brighter the bodies, the brighter the rain
As thunder heaped it on the plain.
Arroyos had been empty, dry,
But now were running with the sky;
And the dancers' feet were in a lake,
Dancing for the people's sake.
And the hands of a ghost became a cup
For scooping handfuls of water up;
And he poured it into a ghostly throat,
And he leaped and waved with every note
Of the dancers' feet and the songs of the drum
That had called the rain and made it come.

For this was not a god of wood,
This was a god whose touch was good,
You could lie down in him and roll
And wet your body and wet your soul.

For this was not a god in a book,
This was a god that you tasted and took
Into a cup that you made with your hands,
Into your children and into your lands—
This was a god that you could see,
Rain, rain in Cochitil!

1926

Witter Bynner

FOG, THE MAGICIAN

Wrapped in a cloak
Of grey mystery,
Fog, the magician,
Steals tip-toe out of the sea.
In seven-league boots
He skims across the sky,
Blowing out the sun,
Blotting out the blue.
On cobweb wires he slides to earth,
Glides through gardens surreptitiously,
And sponges every color out of flowers.
Churches, houses, trees,
He wipes like chalky outlines from a slate.

Fog says—"Presto!"
And birds turn into nothing as they fly,
Men grow vague and vanish.
Fog lifts his hands!
And motor-cars roll off into a void,
Dogs evaporate,
Cats dissolve to bodiless meows.

Noiselessly, peacefully,
The old world ends.
Nothing remains
But fog and me
And another world to be.
Slowly, dimly,
I seem to feel
A little of the wonder and the joy
That must have gladdened God in the beginning,
Creation before him.

1926

Melville Cane

A MOUNTAIN GATEWAY

I know a vale where I would go one day,
When June comes back and all the world once more
Is glad with summer. Deep with shade it lies,
A mighty cleft in the green bosoming hills,
A cool, dim gateway to the mountains' heart.

On either side the wooded slopes come down,
Hemlock and beech and chestnut; here and there
Through the deep forest laurel spreads and gleams,
Pink-white as Daphne in her loveliness—
That still perfection from the world withdrawn,
As if the wood gods had arrested there
Immortal beauty in her breathless flight.

Far overhead against the arching blue
Gray ledges overhang from dizzy heights,
Scarred by a thousand winters and untamed.

The road winds in from the broad riverlands,
Luring the happy traveler turn by turn,
Up to the lofty mountains of the sky.

And where the road runs in the valley's foot,
Through the dark woods the mountain stream comes
down,

Singing and dancing all its youth away
Among the boulders and the shallow runs,
Where sunbeams pierce and mossy tree trunks hang,
Drenched all day long with murmuring sound and
spray.

There, light of heart and footfree, I would go
Up to my home among the lasting hills,
And in my cabin doorway sit me down,
Companioned in that leafy solitude
By the wood ghosts of twilight and of peace.

And in that sweet seclusion I should hear,
Among the cool-leafed beeches in the dusk,
The calm-voiced thrushes at their evening hymn—
So undistraught, so rapturous, so pure,
It well might be, in wisdom and in joy,
The seraphs singing at the birth of time
The unworn ritual of eternal things.

1913

Bliss Carman

FIRST SNOW

I think that death will be
Like this first day of snow,

A crystal brilliance in the air,
And here below
A white expanse of space
Untouched, unstirred,
By the faint penciled footprints
Of a bird.

It will be breathless, still and strange,
That sudden change,
With every thought as clear
As those bare branches etched against the hill,
The hill that of a sudden seems so near,
So white, so very still.
And will we turn and say
On that new day,
Remembering the long ago,
"Death is as beautiful
As snow?"

1928

Katherine Garrison Chapin

ON A NIGHT OF SNOW

Cat, if you go out-doors you must walk in the snow,
You will come back with little white shoes on your
feet,
Little white slippers of snow that have heels of sleet.
Stay by the fire, my Cat. Lie still, do not go.
See how the flames are leaping and hissing low.
I will bring you a saucer of milk like a marguerite,
So white and so smooth, so spherical and so sweet.
Stay with me, Cat. Out-doors the wild winds blow.

Out-doors the wild winds blow, Mistress, and dark is
the night.

Strange voices cry in the trees, intoning strange lore,
And more than cats move, lit by our eyes' green light,
On silent feet where the meadow grasses hang hoar—
Mistress, there are portents abroad of magic and
might,

And things that are yet to be done. Open the door!

1929

Elizabeth Coatsworth

HISTORY

If I told you that in this house
with boarded windows, where doors gape crookedly
and gray wallpaper curls away from the plaster
like the whorls of a dead brain—

If I told you that in the house there lived
Solomon Carney, that he built this chimney with
stones from the dooryard
and plastered these walls with lime that he burned
from the limestone ledge;

If I told you how the twins died here of fever,
Reuben and Rachel, when the doctor was thirty
miles and a long day's drive away;
or about the last son, Amos, who cleared the back
fields and married in time and was crushed in
the first steam thresher,
or about his children who moved West (always the
slow bleeding of the soil) —

If I told you this, it would mean exactly as much to
you as an entry on the flyleaf of a Bible bid in at a
backcountry auction.

But there is also the *Rome* of Edward Gibbon,
seven volumes of text set in eight-point solid over
six-point footnotes,
that tells no more than this.

1923

Malcolm Cowley

POWHATAN'S DAUGHTER

The swift red flesh, a winter king—
Who squired the glacier woman down the sky?
She ran the neighing canyons all the spring;
She sprouted arms; she rose with maize—to die.

And in the autumn drouth, whose burnished hands
With mineral wariness found out the stone
Where prayers, forgotten, streamed the mesa sands?
He holds the twilight's dim, perpetual throne.

Mythical brows we saw retiring—loth,
Disturbed, and destined, into denser green.
Greeting they sped us, on the arrow's oath:
Now lie incorrigibly what years between . . .

There was a bed of leaves, and broken play;
There was a veil upon you, Pocahontas, bride—
O Princess whose brown lap was virgin May;
And bridal flanks and eyes hid tawny pride.

I left the village for dogwood. By the canoe
Tugging below the mill-race, I could see
Your hair's keen crescent running, and the blue
First moth of evening take wing steadily.

What laughing chains the water wove and threw!
I learned to catch the trout's moon whisper; I
Drifted how many hours I never knew,
But, watching, saw that fleet young crescent die—

And one star, swinging, take its place, alone,
Cupped in the larches of the mountain pass—
Until, immortally, it bled into the dawn.
I left my sleek boat nibbling margin grass . . .

I took the portage climb, then chose
A further valley-shed; I could not stop.
Feet nozzled the webs of upper flows;
One white veil gusted from the very top.

O Appalachian Spring! I gained the ledge;
Steep, inaccessible smile that eastward bends
And northward nestles in that violet wedge
Of Adirondacks!—wisped of azure wands,

Over how many bluffs, tarns, streams I sped!
—And knew myself within some boding shade:—
Grey tepees tufting the blue knolls ahead,
Smoke swirling through the yellow chestnut glade.

A distant cloud, a thunder-bud—it grew,
That blanket of the skies: the padded foot
Within,—I heard it; till its rhythms drew,
—Siphoned the black pool from the heart's hot root.

A cyclone threshes in the turbine crest,
Swooping in eagle feathers down your back;
Know, Maquokeeta, greeting; know death's best;
—Fall, Sachem, strictly as the tamarack!

A birch kneels. All her whistling fingers fly.
The oak grove circles in a crash of leaves;
The long moan of a dance is in the sky.
Dance, Maquokeeta: Pocahontas grieves . . .

And every tendon scurries toward the twangs
Of lightning deltaed down your sabre hair.
Now snaps the flint in every tooth; red fangs
And splay tongues thinly busy the blue air.

Dance, Maquokeeta! snake that lives before,
That casts his pelt, and lives beyond! Sprout, horn!
Spark, tooth! Medicine-man, relent, restore —
Lie to us—dance us back the tribal morn!

Spears and assemblies: black drums thrusting on—
O yelling battlements—I, too, was liege
To rainbows currying each pulsant bone:
Surpassed the circumstance, danced out the siege!

And buzzard-circleted, screamed from the stake;
I could not pick the arrows from my side.
Wrapped in that fire, I saw more escorts wake—
Flickering, sprint up the hill groins like a tide.

I heard the hush of lava wrestling your arms,
And stag teeth foam about the raven throat;
White cataracts of heaven in seething swarms
Fed down your anklets to the sunset's moat.

O, like the lizard in the furious noon,
That drops his legs and colours in the sun,
—And laughs, pure serpent, Time itself, and moon
Of his own fate, I saw thy change begun!

And saw thee dive to kiss that destiny
Like one white meteor, pursuant and blent
At last with all that's consummate and free
There, where the first and last gods hold thy tent.

Thewed of the levin, thunder-shod and lean,
Lo, through what infinite seasons dost thou gaze—
Across what bivouacs of thy angered slain,
And see'st thy bride immortal in the maize!

Totem and fire-gall, slumbering pyramid—
Though other calendars now stack the sky,
Thy freedom is her largesse, Prince, and hid
On paths that knewest best to claim her by.

High unto Labrador the sun strikes free
Her speechless dream of snow, and stirred again,
She is the torrent and the singing tree;
And she is virgin to the last of men . . .

West, west, and south! winds over Cumberland
And winds across the llano grass resume
Her hair's warm sibilance, her breasts are fanned
O stream by slope and vineyard—into bloom!

And when the caribou slant down for salt
Do arrows thirst and leap? Do antlers shine
Alert, star-triggered in the listening vault
Of dusk?—And are her perfect brows to thine?

We danced, O Brave, we danced beyond their farms,
In cobalt desert closures made our vows . . .
Now is the strong prayer folded in thine arms,
The serpent with the eagle in the boughs.

1928

Hart Crane

CINQUAINS

TRIAD

These be
Three silent things:
The falling snow . . . the hour
Before the dawn . . . the mouth of one
Just dead.

SUSANNA AND THE ELDERS

"Why do
You thus devise
Evil against her?" "For that
She is beautiful, delicate;
Therefore."

THE WARNING

Just now,
Out of the strange
Still dusk . . . as strange, as still . . .
A white moth flew. . . . Why am I grown
So cold?

1916

Adelaide Crapsey

SONG IN SPITE OF MYSELF

Never love with all your heart,
It only ends in aching,
And bit by bit to the smallest part
That organ will be breaking.

Never love with all your mind,
It only ends in fretting;
In musing on sweet joys behind,
Too poignant for forgetting.

Never love with all your soul;
For such there is no ending,
Though a mind that frets may find control,
And a shattered heart find mending.

Give but a grain of the heart's rich seed,
Confine some under cover,
And when Love goes bid him Godspeed,
And find another lover.

1929

Countée Cullen

SHUTTLE SONG

As a weaver's shuttle,
To and fro,
The days come
And the days go.

Faster and faster
The shuttles run,
Now what shall be woven
When the web is done?

"You shall have a shroud
For life that's done
And a birth robe
For life begun.

"Be the thread dark,
Or be the thread fair,
Stain of passion
Or white of prayer,
When the shuttles are still
And the last thread run,
You shall wear it
Beyond the sun."

1925

Marion Cummings

BIRDS IN SNOW

See,
how they trace
across the very-marble
of this place,
bright sevens and printed fours,
elevens and careful eights,
abracadabra

of a mystic's lore
or symbol
outlined
on a wizard's gate;

like plaques of ancient writ
our garden flags now name
the great and very-great;
our garden flags acclaim
in carven hieroglyph,
here king and kinglet lie,
here prince and lady rest,
mystical queens sleep here
and heroes that are slain

in holy righteous war;
hieratic, slim and fair,
the tracery written here,
proclaims what's left unsaid
in Egypt of her dead.

1929

H.D.

THE ISLANDS

I

What are the islands to me,
what is Greece,
what is Rhodes, Samos, Chios,
what is Paros facing west,
what is Crete?

What is Samothrace,
rising like a ship,
what is Imbros, rending the storm-waves
with its breast?

What is Naxos, Paros, Milos,
what is the circle about Lycia,
what, the Cyclades'
white necklace?

What is Greece—
Sparta, rising like a rock,
Thebes, Athens,
what is Corinth?

What is Euboea
with its island-violets,
what is Euboea, spread with grass,
set with swift shoals,
what is Crete?

What are the islands to me,
what is Greece?

II

What can love of land give to me
that you have not—
what do the tall Spartans know,
and gentler Attic folk?

What has Sparta and her women
more than this?

What are the islands to me
if you are lost—
what is Naxos, Tinos, Andros,
and Delos, the clasp
of the white necklace?

III

What can love of land give to me
that you have not,
what can love of strife break in me
that you have not?

Though Sparta enter Athens,
Thebes wrack Sparta,
each changes as water,
salt, rising to wreak terror
and fall back.

IV

"What has love of land given to you
that I have not?"

I have questioned Tyrians
where they sat
on the black ships,
weighted with rich stuffs,
I have asked the Greeks
from the white ships,
and Greeks from ships whose hulks
lay on the wet sand, scarlet
with great beaks,

I have asked bright Tyrians
and tall Greeks—
“what has love of land given you?”
And they answered—“peace.”

V

But beauty is set apart,
beauty is cast by the sea,
a barren rock,
beauty is set about
with wrecks of ships,
upon our coast, death keeps
the shallows—death waits,
clutching toward us
from the deeps.

Beauty is set apart;
the winds that slash its beach,
swirl the coarse sand
upward toward the rocks.

Beauty is set apart
from the islands
and from Greece.

VI

In my garden,
the winds have beaten
the ripe lilies;
in my garden, the salt

has wilted the first flakes
of young narcissus
and the younger hyacinth,
and the salt has crept
under the leaves of the white hyacinth.

In my garden,
even the wind-flowers lie flat,
broken by the wind at last.

VII

What are the islands to me
if you are lost,
what is Paros to me
if your eyes draw back,
what is Milos
if you take fright of beauty,
terrible, torturous, isolated,
a barren rock?

What is Rhodes, Crete,
what is Paros, facing west,
what, white Imbros?

What are the islands to me
if you hesitate,
what is Greece, if you draw back
from the terror
and cold splendour of song
and its bleak sacrifice?

1920

H. D.

SPOKEN AT A CASTLE GATE

Before you touch the bolt that locks this gate
Be warned. There's no return where you are going.
A sword is tinder at the touch of fate
And crumbles in a way beyond your knowing.

Something I've heard, but something less I tell.
An old man knows, advises; young men smile,
Blow slug-horns, chink a latch, or clank a bell.
I've watched a many a one this weary while.

You can hear the nightingales, I won't deny.
They always sing for eager souls like you,
Perched on their boughs of possibility,
Most vaguely heard and still more vaguely true.

And they are more, perhaps, than mere tradition.
They must exist, though none come back to say
How they are feathered, or what rare nutrition
Keeps them, piping their sad peculiar lay.

Gardens there are, and Queens, no doubt, a-walking,
White blooms adrift on gold and marvelous hair.
Young men in murmurous dreams have heard them
talking,
Leaped up, like you, and entered . . . vanished . . .
where?

For all I know, the castle's just a dream,
A shadow piled to mask a dangerous ledge,
A fantasy blown from devils' lungs in steam,
Made permanent here, just on a chasm's edge,

Where you will plunge, forever, ever falling,
For infinite days and nights, a dark lump whirled
That hears or thinks it hears an old voice calling
Beyond the stars that cluster near this world;

A voice that follows you past endless night,
Familiar, yet not quite half-known or named,
The last and sorry remnant of delight
That you lived for, pursued, and touched, and
claimed,

Even as you touch the bolt that locks this gate,
Smiling, with patience such as fits old men
Who prophesy. Ah, yes, what you create
Perhaps you'll find,—but never come back again.

1925

Donald Davidson

TO MY LITTLE SON

In your face I sometimes see
Shadowings of the man to be,
And eager, dream of what my son
Will be in twenty years and one.

But when you are to manhood grown,
And all your manhood ways are known,
Then shall I, wistful, try to trace
The child you once were in your face?

1924

Julia Johnson Davis

"SHE SEWS FINE LINEN"

She sews fine linen
With trembling fingers;
Thin, withered hands
Where no bloom lingers.

The sun glints on
A worn gold ring —
Granddaughter marries
Her man this spring.

They go to the church
On an April day;
That other April —
How far away!

1923

Julia Johnson Davis

LACRIMAE RERUM

Rossetti walked his sorrow to a field,
Lay in the grass, and watched the wood-spurge flower.
The three-cupped wood-spurge: all that earth would
yield

Rossetti to remember of that hour.
He lay with grief, as others too have lain
Who must remember strangely other things.
Things that still keep the contours of their pain,
Whose colors cling longer than sorrow clings.

The tears of things that have not any words,
Deeper than music, stronger than the sea,
And sadder than the flight of homing birds:
Remembered things, outlasting memory.
The shapes of suffering hold, when you and I
And sorrow, and this cause for sorrow, die.

1921

Babette Deutsch

FALL OF STARS

The snow came down like stars tonight
Over the city silently.
The air, like a great glittering tree,
Bloomed noiselessly with light.

I thought, it is the snow I see
Like stars. And it was long ago
That ever I saw the stars like snow.

And I thought of a boy, a long time dead,
Who dreamed such beauty out of pain
That music moved within his brain,
And the stars stormed about his head.

His ghost is like the wind, I said,
That cries into the crystal gloom,
And wanders where the white clouds blow.

And I shall hear his song, I know,
Wherever the boughs of silence bloom
With snow like stars or stars like snow.

1927

George Dillon

ELEGY

I shall lose your face in the flickering of strange faces
That rush toward mine all day.

At night I shall go to the nervous, crowded places.
I shall concentrate on the people and the play,
And follow along to the dancing, and be gay.

I shall lose your voice in the anarchy of voices,
The rustle of wheels and footsteps and the wind.
I shall listen all day, I shall learn innumerable
 noises

To disentangle from what the city has dinned—
And at the end,

Waiting for sleep, I shall think of music, or say
Old rhymes, or pray.

All this to frighten the ghost of one sound away.

All this to frighten away one ghost who would start
Perilously into my blood by day and by night,
Perilously upon my mouth with the remembered kiss
Like a paralysis,

Till I am wound in your beauty as in a tightened net,
And suddenly it is enough, and I must forget.

I know the way. I shall lose part by part,
Till all is lost but the insensible thing,
The dream, the image not of sound or sight:
It is a wild perfume upon the world, it is the bright
Perpetual honey in the hive of spring,
It is the broken bell whose legends ring
Fatally and for ever in my heart.

1929

George Dillon

THE LILACS

To A . . . and H . . . , Royal Air Force

August 1925

We sit drinking tea
Beneath the lilacs on a summer afternoon,
Comfortably, at our ease
With fresh linen on our knees
And we sit, we three
In diffident contentedness
Lest we let each other guess
How happy we are
Together here, watching the young moon
Lying shyly on her back, and the first star.

There are women here:
Smooth-shouldered creatures in sheer scarves, that pass
And eye me strangely as they pass.
One of them, my hostess, pauses near:
. . . Are you quite all right, sir? . . . she stops to ask
. . . You are a bit lonely, I fear.
Will you have more tea? cigarettes? no? . . .
I thank her, waiting for them to go . . .
To me they are as figures on a masque.
. . . Who? . . . shot down
Last spring . . . poor chap, his mind . . .
The doctors say . . . hoping rest will bring . . .
Busy with their tea and cigarettes and books
Their voices come to me like tangled rooks.
We sit in silent amity.

. . . It was a morning in late May . . .
A white woman, a white wanton near a brake,
A rising whiteness mirrored in a lake;
And I, old chap, was out before the day
In my little pointed-eared machine,
Stalking her through the shimmering reaches of the
sky.

I knew that I could catch her when I liked
For no nymph ever ran as swiftly as she could.
We mounted, up and up,
And found her at the border of a wood,
A cloud forest, and pausing at its brink
I felt her arms and her cool breath.
The bullet struck me here, I think,
In the left breast
And killed my little pointed-eared machine. I saw
it fall,

The last wine in the cup . . .
I thought that I could find her when I liked
But now I wonder if I found her, after all.

One should not die like this
On such a day,
From angry bullets, or other modern way.
Yet science is a dangerous mouth to kiss.
One should fall, I think, to some Etruscan dart
In meadows where the Oceanides
Flower the wanton grass with dancing
And, on such a day as this,
Become a tall wreathed column: I should like to be
An ilex on an isle in purple seas.
Instead, I had a bullet through my heart . . .

. . . Yes, you are right:
One should not die like this,
And for no cause nor reason in the world.
It's well enough for one like you to talk
Of going in the far thin sky to stalk
The mouth of death, you did not know the bliss
Of home and children, the serenity
Of living and of work and joy that was our heritage.
And, best of all, of age.
We were too young.
Still . . . he draws his hand across his eyes
. . . Still, it could not be otherwise.

We had been
Raiding over Mannheim. You've seen
The place? Then you know
How one hangs just beneath the stars and sees
The quiet darkness burst and shatter against them,
And, rent by spears of light, rise in shuddering waves
Crested with restless futile flickerings.
The black earth drew us down, that night,
Out of the bullet-tortured air,
A great black bowl of fireflies . . .
There is an end to this, somewhere . . .
One should not die like this . . .

One should not die like this.
His voice has dropped and the wind is mouthing his
words
While the lilacs nod their heads on slender stalks,
Agreeing while he talks,
Caring not if he is heard, or is not heard.
One should not die like this . . .

Half audible, half silent words
That hover like grey birds
About our heads.
We sit in silent amity.
I am cold, for now the sun is gone
And the air is cooler where we three
Are sitting. The light has followed the sun
And I no longer see
The pale lilacs stirring against the lilac pale sky.

They bend their heads toward me as one head.
. . . Old man . . . they say . . . How did you die? . . .

I—I am not dead.

I hear their voices as from a great distance . . . Not
dead

He's not dead, poor chap; he didn't die . . .

1925

William Faulkner

SONNET

In the fair picture of my life's estate
Which long ago my yearning fancy drew
From hints of poets, prophets, lords of fate,
What place is there, belovèd one, for you?
How in this edifice of the soaring dome,
Noble, harmonious, lifted towards the stars,
Shall I carve forth a niche to be the home
Of you and of my love that round you wars?
Ah, folly his, who builds him such a house

Too early, by impatient visions led,
Ere he can know what blood shall stain his brows,
And from what troubled streams his heart is fed.
Now must he labor, in late night, alone
To wreck,—and then rebuild it, stone by stone.

1914

Arthur Davison Ficke

OXEN

Weary, they plod the ploughlands of the World.
Wherever turf is turned their hooves have pressed.
Gladly the great Earth-mother gives her breast
For them to trample—her pure bosom, pearled
With dews of innumerable mornings. Where were
furl
Slit pitiful flags, their passing stills dismay:
Yoke-ridden, mute, Peace binds on them her bay.—
For this the goad, the lash, the curse age-hurled!
Patient (Ah, theirs the patient eyes of Christ!),
They tread the centuries. Behind them flows
The furrowed glebe, and hath since Egypt rose,
Starlike, above the Nile. They bide the tryst
Man hath appointed; till he dig their graves,
Serve him, complaintless, who hath made them
slaves.

1918

Mahlon Leonard Fisher

THE BLACK ROCK

To Thomas Hardy

I

Off the long headland, threshed about by round-backed
breakers,

There is a black rock, standing high at the full tide;
Off the headland there is emptiness,
And the moaning of the ocean,
And the black rock standing alone.

In the orange wake of sunset,
Where the gulls have fallen silent,
And the winds slip out and meet together from the
edges of the sea,
Settled down in the dark water,
Fragment of the earth abandoned,
Ragged and huge the black rock stands.

It is as if it listened,
Stood and listened very intently
To the everlasting swish and boom and hiss of spray,
Listened to the creeping-on of night;
While afar off, to the westward,
Dark clouds silently are packed together,
With a dull red glow between.

It is listening, it is lonely;
For the sunlight
Showed it houses near the headland,
Trees and flowers;

For the sunlight caused to grow upon it scanty blades
of grass,
In the crannies of the rock,
Here and there;
For the sunlight brought it back remembrance of a
world
Long rejected
And long lost;
Showed it white sails near the coast,
Children paddling in the bay,
Signs of life and kinship with mankind
Long forgot.
Now the sunset leaves it there,
Bare, rejected, a black scrap of rock,
Battered by the tides,
Wallowing in the sea.

Bleak, adrift,
Shattered like a monstrous ship of stone,
Left aground
By the waters, on its voyage;
With no foot to touch its deck,
With no hand to lift its sails,
There it stands.

II

Gulls wheel near it in the sunlight,
White backs flash;
Gray wings eddy, curl, are lifted, swept away,
On a wave;
Gulls pass rapidly in the sunlight
Round about it.

Gulls pass, screaming harshly to the wave-thrusts,
Laughing in uncanny voices;
Lonely flocks of great white birds,
Like to ghosts;

But the black rock does not welcome them,
Knows by heart already all their cries;
Hears, repeated, for the millionth millionth time
All the bitterness of ocean
Howling through their voices.

It still dreams of other things,
Of the cities and the fields,
And the lands near to the coast
Where the lonely grassy valleys
Full of dun herds deeply browsing,
Sweep in wide curves to the sea;

It still holds the memory
Of the wild bees booming, murmuring,
In the fields of thyme and clover,
And the shadows of broad trees
Towards noon:

It still lifts its huge scarred sides
Vainly to the burning glare of sun,
With the memory of doom
Thick upon them;
And the hope that by some fate
It may come once more to be
Part of all the earth it had;

Freed from clamor of the waves,
From the broken planks and wreckage

Drifting aimless here and there,
With the tides;
Freed to share its life with earth,
And to be a dwelling-place
For the outcast tribes of men,
Once again.

III

In the morning,
When the dark clouds whirl swift over,
From the southeast, dragging with them
Heavy curtains of gray rain,

The black rock rejoices.
And its little gullies drip with cool refreshing showers.
All the crannies, all the steeps,
All the meagre sheltered places
Fill with drip and tinkle of the rain.

But when the afternoon between the clouds
Leaves adrift cool patches of the sea,
Between floes of polar snow;

Then the rock is all aflame:
Diamonds, emeralds, topazes,
Burn and shatter, and it seems
Like a garden filled with flowers.

Like a garden where the rapid wheeling lights
And black shadows lift and sway and fall;
Spring and summer and red autumn chase each other
Moment after moment, on its face.

So, till sunset
Lifts once more its lonely crimson touch,
Menacing and mournful, far away;
Then an altar left abandoned, it stands facing all the
 horizon
Where the light departs.

Massive black and crimson towers,
Cities carved by the wind from out the clouds of
 sunset look at it;
It has dreamed them, it has made this sacrifice,
Now it sees their rapid passing,
Soon it will be bleak and all alone.

IV

Abrupt and broken rock,
Black rock, awash in the midst of the waters,
Lonely, aloof, deserted,
Impotent to change;

Storm-clouds lift off,
The dawn strikes the hills far inland.
But you are forever tragic and apart,
Forever battling with the sea;

Till the waves have ground you to dust—
Till the ages are all accomplished,
Till you have relinquished the last reluctant fragment
To the gnawing teeth of the wave;

I know the force of your patience,
I have shared your grim silent struggle,

The mad dream you have, and will not abandon,
To cover your strength with gay flowers;

Keel of the world, apart,
I have lived like you.

Some men are soil of the earth;
Their lives are broad harvest fields
Green in the spring, and gold in their season,
Then barren and mown;

But those whom my soul has loved
Are bare rocks standing off headlands;
Cherishing, perhaps, a few bitter wild flowers,
That bloom in the granite, year after year.

1920

John Gould Fletcher

ACQUAINTED WITH THE NIGHT

I have been one acquainted with the night.
I have walked out in rain and back in rain.
I have outwalked the furthest city light.

I have looked down the saddest city lane.
I have passed by the watchman on his beat
And dropped my eyes unwilling to explain.

I have stood still and hushed the sound of feet
When far away an interrupted cry
Came over houses from another street,

But not to call me back or say good-bye;
And further still at an unearthly height
One luminary clock against the sky

Proclaimed the time was neither wrong nor right.
I have been one acquainted with the night.

1929

Robert Frost

THE NEED OF BEING VERSED IN COUNTRY THINGS

The house had gone to bring again
To the midnight sky a sunset glow.
Now the chimney was all of the house that stood,
Like a pistil after the petals go.

The barn opposed across the way,
That would have joined the house in flame
Had it been the will of the wind, was left
To bear forsaken the place's name.

No more it opened with all one end
For teams that came by the stony road
To drum on the floor with scurrying hoofs
And brush the mow with the summer load.

The birds that came to it through the air
At broken windows flew out and in,
Their murmur more like the sigh we sigh
From too much dwelling on what has been.

Yet for them the lilac renewed its leaf,
And the aged elm, though touched with fire;
And the dry pump flung up an awkward arm;
And the fence post carried a strand of wire.

For them there was really nothing sad.
But though they rejoiced in the nest they kept,
One had to be versed in country things
Not to believe the phoebes wept.

1921

Robert Frost

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

1915

Robert Frost

TO EARTHWARD

Love at the lips was touch
As sweet as I could bear;
And once that seemed too much;
I lived on air

That crossed me from sweet things,
The flow of—was it musk
From hidden grapevine springs
Down hill at dusk?

I had the swirl and ache
From sprays of honeysuckle
That when they're gathered shake
Dew on the knuckle.

I craved strong sweets, but those
Seemed strong when I was young;
The petal of the rose
It was that stung.

Now no joy but lacks salt
That is not dashed with pain

And weariness and fault;
I crave the stain

Of tears, the aftermark
Of almost too much love,
The sweet of bitter bark
And burning clove.

When stiff and sore and scarred,
I take away my hand
From leaning on it hard
In grass and sand,

The hurt is not enough:
I long for weight and strength
To feel the earth as rough
To all my length.

1924

Robert Frost

STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

1923

Robert Frost

SACRIFICE

There is no wine unless the grape is crushed;
There is no bread while wheat is still in grain.
It may be that the soul can only grow
Through sorrow and the body's pain.

1926

Caroline Giltinan

AFTER SLEET

Glazed and paved with Heaven, lie
Streets enameled with the sky.
Dawn finds sunset prisoned still,
Bright in many an icicle. . . .
And on lawns of splintered glass,
Glitters brittle, vitreous grass;
Every twig of strange device,
Glistens, jacketed in ice.

There a hillside's glacial glow
Holds a crystal lava's flow.
Ice and fire, ice and fire,
Pausing in their ancient duel,
Brothers now in one desire,
Fuse the city to a jewell . . .

1927

Louis Ginsberg

THE MEADOW

Sinking knee-deep into awe,
In this luminous field, I heard
Manifesto of a bird
Publishing this meadow's law.
As its tidings rang in air,
Brooklets vowelled proverbs there . . .
While no clouds above them tarried,
On the pond, two Heavens married . . .
All the flowers I could see
By a sense more keen than sight
In this field's unearthly light,—
Flowers mangered mystery.
Every rock was pasture to
Beauty that the meadow knew.
Vines upon their journey high,
On their pilgrimage to sky,
Vine and branch—and I—and I—
Rose and weed and bough and blade,
Rock, sweet anchorage to shade,
Twig and petal, brook and feather,
Leaf and pebble, bush and pond,

Link by link in network vast,
All were woven, braided fast,
All were ligatured together
In one universal bond.
Each was but a separate name
Each apparelled but the same
Quenchless and informing flame . . .

1929

Louis Ginsberg

SMALL TOWN

Anything can happen
When the silver crown
Of the moon is laid
On a small town;

When a gate swings wide
And the shadows stalk
Side by side
On a cool walk,

And no one sees
And no one hears
When the silver keys
Turn the locks of years—

Oh, anything can happen,
Anything at all,
The moon drop her ring
Or a star fall!

1929

Leigh Hanes

MOUNTAINS

God give me mountains
With hills at their knees,
Mountains too high
For the flutter of trees,

Mountains that know
The dark valleys of death,
That have kissed a pale star
And felt its last breath

And still lift the dawn
In a golden-rimmed cup—
God give me mountains,
And strength to climb up!

1927

Leigh Hanes

UPPER AIR

High, pale, imperial places of slow cloud
And windless wells of sun-swept silence . . . Sense
Of some aware, half-scornful permanence
Past which we flow like water that is loud
A moment on the granite. Nothing here
Beats with the pulse that beat in us below;
That was a flame; this is the soul of snow
Immortalized in moveless atmosphere.

Yet we shall brood upon this haunt of wings
When love, like perfume washed away in rain,

Dies on the years. Still we shall come again,
Seeking the clouds as we have sought the sea,
Asking the peace of these immortal things
That will not mix with our mortality.

1921

Frank Ernest Hill

AFTER POETRY

He who in spring's rebirth has put his trust
Now answers not to April or to May,
Nor sees the moon-white apple blossom sway,
Nor breathes the sweetness on the evening gust.
He who was first to climb the height of day
Lies full-length in the valley of the dust;
His sword sleeps in his hand, and it is rust;
His heart sleeps in his breast, and it is clay.

Brother, so mute among the fallen years,
We come at dayspring to your living tomb
That is the green earth, and we shed no tears,
Knowing that if you wander elsewhere
Soon will you give us gracious welcome there,
And, if you perished, then we share your doom.

1929

Robert Hillyer

THERMOPYLAE

Men lied to them and so they went to die.
Some fell, unknowing that they were deceived,

And some escaped, and bitterly bereaved,
Beheld the truth they loved shrink to a lie.
And those there were that never had believed,
But from afar had read the gathering sky,
And darkly wrapt in that dread prophecy
Died, trusting that their truth might be retrieved.

It matters not. For life deals thus with Man;
To die alone deceived or with the mass,
Or disillusioned to complete his span.
Thermopylae or Golgotha, all one—
The young dead legions in the narrow pass;
The stark black cross against the setting sun.

1919

Robert Hillyer

MEMORY

Memory is a quiet thing,
Lipping at the edge of mind,
Nor even murmuring
Of all the sea behind.

We do not think it strange
The furious noise of wave
Should be with sudden change
Cool water in a cave,

Where the bugles of the wind
And the green charging roar
Diminish and are thinned
Till they sound no more.

But even the longest breaker
Here at last will come,
With the loudest wind, its maker,
And both lie dumb.

1929

John Holmes

RATIONAL MAN

His restless glance abruptly drew
An arc halfway around the rim
Of earth's mysterious big bowl;
After escaping from his soul
Colors of sleep were standing by,
Their dark-blue shadows all around him.
This was the kind of night, he knew,
That, for no cause at all, would hound him,
And set his spirit prowling, prowling . . .
His glance, grown tired of running, flew
Suddenly upward to the sky
And stopped. The moon gazed back at him;
He stared, frowning a little, scowling . . .

He had discovered that, despite
Supposed advantages of sex,
When that white globe was on the wax
He could not hope to be immune
To lunar influence, nor fight
The monthly fulness of the moon.

And then he saw some poplar trees
All in a line, set close together,

Essential to a stiff design
In formal-garden symmetries:
He counted them, and there were nine.

He thought that they were beautiful:
Then he began to wonder whether
They were, like him, susceptible
To that distinct unearthly pull;
Some influence, he saw, was making
Their leaves keep rustling and shaking
Strangely. There seemed to be no breeze.

Rest and quiver, rest and quiver,
The trembling trees stood close together.
Their false propinquity, however,
Was not surprising to discover,
For he remembered he had heard
Poplars would never touch each other
No matter how their limbs were stirred.

There was a symbol for his shield!

Nine poplars on a moonlit field
Aloof, fastidious, intense
With shuddering self-preference!
He had no one near him to touch
But the idea consoled him much,
And he, whose lot was not like these,
Took comfort from the poplar trees.

1925

Rolfe Humphries

TO A YOUNG ARTIST

It is good for strength not to be merciful
To its own weakness, good for the deep urn to run
 over, good to explore
The peaks and the deeps, who can endure it,
Good to be hurt, who can be healed afterward: but
 you that have whetted consciousness
Too bitter an edge, too keenly daring,
So that the color of a leaf can make you tremble and
 your own thoughts like harriers
Tear the live mind: were your bones mountains,
Your blood rivers to endure it? and all that labor of
 discipline labors to death.
Delight is exquisite, pain is more present;
You have sold the armor, you have bought shining
 with burning, one should be stronger than
 strength
To fight baresark in the stabbing field
In the rage of the stars: the world's unconsciousness
 is the treasure, the tower, the fortress;
Referred to that one may live anything;
The temple and the tower: poor dancer on the flints
 and shards in the temple porches turn home.

1928

Robinson Jeffers

HURT HAWKS

I

The broken pillar of the wing jags from the clotted
 shoulder,

The wing trails like a banner in defeat,
No more to use the sky forever but live with famine
And pain a few days: cat nor coyote
Will shorten the week of waiting for death, there is
game without talons.
He stands under the oak-bush and waits
The lame feet of salvation; at night he remembers
freedom
And flies in a dream, the dawns ruin it.
He is strong and pain is worse to the strong, incapacity
is worse.
The curs of the day come and torment him
At distance, no power but death the redeemer will
humble that head,
The intrepid readiness, the terrible eyes.
The wild God of the world is sometimes merciful to
those
That ask mercy, not often to the arrogant.
You do not know him, you communal people, or you
have forgotten him;
Intemperate and savage, the hawk remembers him;
Beautiful and wild, the hawks, and men that are
dying, remember him.

II

I'd sooner, except the penalties, kill a man than a
hawk; but the great redtail
Had nothing left but unable misery
From the bones too shattered for mending, the wing
that trailed under his talons when he moved.
We had fed him six weeks, I gave him freedom,

He wandered over the foreland hill and returned in
the evening, asking for death,
Not like a beggar, still eyed with the old
Implacable arrogance. I gave him the lead gift in the
twilight. What fell was relaxed,
Owl-downy, soft feminine feathers; but what
Soared: the fierce rush: the night-herons by the
flooded river cried fear at its rising
Before it was quite unsheathed from reality.

1928

Robinson Jeffers

THE INTERPRETER

In the very early morning when the light was low
She got all together and she went like snow,
Like snow in the springtime on a sunny hill,
And we were only frightened and can't think still.

We can't think quite that the katydid and frogs
And the little crying chickens and the little grunting
hogs,
And the other living things that she spoke for to us
Have nothing more to tell her since it happened thus.

She never is around for any one to touch,
But of ecstasy and longing she too knew much . . .
And always when any one has time to call his own
She will come and be beside him as quiet as a stone.

1917

Orrick Johns

LITTLE THINGS

There's nothing very beautiful and nothing very gay
About the rush of faces in the town by day;
But a light tan cow in a pale green mead,
That is very beautiful, beautiful indeed . . .
And the soft March wind and the low March mist
Are better than kisses in a dark street kissed . . .
The fragrance of the forest when it wakes at dawn,
The fragrance of a trim green village lawn,
The hearing of the murmur of the rain at play—
These things are beautiful, beautiful as day!
And I shan't stand waiting for love or scorn
When the feast is laid for a day new-born . . .
Oh, better let the little things I loved when little
Return when the heart finds the great things brittle;
And better is a temple made of bark and thong
Than a tall stone temple that may stand too long.

1917

Orrick Johns

FOOL'S PARADISE

"*Fool's Paradise*," I hear the wise ones say.
Ah, but we do not put it in that way—
We fools, who, sometimes wiser than the wise,
With clearer vision read, "*Fool's Paradise*"!

You say we lose them? So was Eden lost!
Who walks therein must ever pay the cost.
Yet how shall wisdom better this, O wise?
I, though a fool, have dwelt in Paradise!

1924

Josephine Johnson

JEFFERSON'S HILLS

(*A ballad*)

Jefferson Callan went to the War
One day when the corn was green.
He carried a saber in his hand. . . .
Grandmother knows. She seen.

She seen him flutter along the road
Like a wild hawk on the wing;
And over the hill by Davy's Mill
She heard him sing.

And Captain Beal came by, came by
In the autumn when oaks were red:
"Jeff was brave, and don't you cry. . . .
Poor Jeff is dead."

They seen him fall at Bridal Spring
With one leg off at the knee;
He died with his saber wet with blood
Over in Tennessee.

Only at night he galloped back.
(Darling, the stars were drumming!)
People said that they heard him call,
"Gen'ral, I am coming."

Grandpap opened the cabin door;
Nothing but whip-poor-wills. . . .
"Oh, they cry in the brush tonight!
These were poor Jeff's hills."

And then *he* came in a swish of wind;
The glare of his eyes was green.
He had the cavalry out with him. . . .
Grandmother knows. *She seen.*

1929

MacKinlay Kantor

RUN—SHEEP—RUN

Light little elves came out to dine.
White silk blossoms, they ate, and wine;
Rhubarb torn from the wet earth's black,
Plaited salads of columbine.
It was nine o'clock, and the sun
Pulled its cloud-quilt over its head,
Out where the tingling wires bled
Songs and threnes through the tired day.

They whispered faint and scampered across
Wet green lots where the grass was dross. . . .
Run-Sheep-Sheepy . . . Out of the moon
Cool little lambs came down too soon—
Old man Wiley saw them dance.
(He'd brow-beaten his girl at noon)
He saw their dew-lapped tails wag round:
Run-Sheep-Run . . . A funny bright sound!
Old Man Wiley heard the feet
Young and eager, panting along.
Clickerty-clacker beside his well—
Strumming the weird, prophetic song:
Come, little lambs! The trees are dark—

*One red light in the courthouse park!
All of the moths swing silver fiddles
There in the shade, and tell you riddles. . . .
Where to hide, where to hide?
Up in Old Man Wiley's mow!
Ghosts will welcome you inside,
Seated on dusty coil and plow.
Come tin-footed, coy and slyly,
Creep like a gray cat stepping highly
Into the dusty-scented mow—
Hide away from Old Man Wiley!*

In from the prairie, there came a lark;
Lit and sang in the courthouse park.
All of the children sat and listened,
Laughed at the gossip the lark pealed out,
Cheered in fun as its tear drops glistened!
Little feet, thin feet flew away
Over the town. They raced to play
Run-Sheep-Run till the cold dawn came. . . .
One would die on a railroad train,
One of pneumonia caught in the rain,
One of the flu in the Q.M.C.—
One of a sad, tubercular pain.
But up they danced past the midnight windows—
Squatting in peace like infant Hindus!
All of them hid in the vine-pressed trees,
Bedded by laughter, caught by a sneeze!

Old Man Wiley sneered and glared
Till day marched out with a cold sword bared,
Butchered the lambs and made their tomb
And swept the blood with a sunshine broom.

Run-Sheep-Sheepy . . . His daughter wept;
His sour wife turned on her side and slept—
Cold face, fierce face, fat face laden.
Nobody knew of her soul except
The harsh old man and the curséd maiden.

Hidden in bells, the children laughed
As pansies washed their lips in the dew.

Light foot, silk foot under the sun—
Old Man Wiley: Run-Sheep-Run. . . .

1928

MacKinlay Kantor

NUN SNOW

A pantomime of beads

Earth Voice

Is she
thoughtless of life,
a lover of imminent death,
Nun Snow
touching her strings of white beads?
Is it her unseen hands
which urge the beads to tremble?
Does Nun Snow,
aware of the death she must die alone,
away from the nuns
of the green beads,
of the ochre and brown,
of the purple and black—

does she improvise
along those soundless strings
in the worldly hope
that the answering, friendly tune,
the faithful folk-like miracle,
will shine in a moment or two?

Moon Voice

Or peradventure
are the beads merely wayward,
on an evening so soft,
and One Wind
is so gentle a mesmerist
as he draws them and her with his hand?

Earth Voice

Was it Full Moon,
who contrives tales of this order,
and himself loves the heroine,
Nun Snow—

Wind Voice

Do you see his beads courting hers?
lascivious monk!—

Earth Voice

Was it Full Moon,
slyly innocent of guile,
propounder of sorrowless whimses,
who breathed that suspicion?
Is it One Wind,
the wily, scholarly pedant—
is it he who retorts—

Wind Voice

Like olden allegros
in olden sonatas,
all tales have two themes,
she is beautiful
he is beautiful,
with the traditional movement,
their beads court each other,
revealing a cadence as fatally true
as the sum which follows a one-plus-one—
so, why inquire further?
Nay, inquire further,
deduce it your fashion!
Nun Snow,
as you say,
touches her strings of white beads,
Full Moon,
let you add,
his lute of yellow strings;
and Our Night
is square, nay,
Our Night
is round, nay,
Our Night
is a blue balcony—
and therewith close your inquisition!

Earth Voice

Who urged the beads to tremble?
They're still now!
Fallen, or cast over me!
Nun, Moon and Wind are gone!
Are they betraying her?—

Moon Voice
Ask Our Night—

Earth Voice
Did the miracle appear?—

Moon Voice
Ask Our Night,
merely a child on a balcony,
letting down her hair and
black beads, a glissando—
ask her what she means,
dropping the curtain so soon!

1919

Alfred Kreymborg

HYMN TO DEMETER

From "A Sicilian Idyl"

Weave the dance and raise again the sacred chorus;
Wreath the garlands of the spring about the hair;
Now once more the meadows burst in bloom before us,
Crying swallows dart and glitter through the air.
Glints the plowshare in the brown and fragrant
furrow;
Pigeons coo in shady coverts as they pair;
Come the furtive mountain folk from cave and
burrow,
Lean, and blinking at the sunlight's sudden glare.

Bright through midmost heaven moves the lesser Lion;
Hide the Hyades in ocean caverns hoar;
Past the shoulders of the sunset flames Orion,
Following the sisters seaward evermore.
Gleams the east at evening, lit by low Arcturus;
Out to subtle-scented dawns beside the shore,
Yet a little and the Pleiades will lure us:
Weave the dance and raise the chorus as of yore.

Far to eastward up the fabled gulf of Issus,
Northward, southward, westward, now the trader
goes,
Passing headlands clustered yellow with narcissus,
Bright with hyacinth, with poppy, and with rose.
Shines the sea and falls the billow as undaunted,
Past the rising of the stars that no man knows,
Sails he onward through the islands siren-haunted,
Till the clashing gates of rock before him close.

Kindly Mother of the beasts and birds and flowers,
Gracious bringer of the barley and the grain,
Earth awakened feels thy sunlight and thy showers;
Great Demeter! Let us call thee not in vain;
Lead us safely from the seed-time to the threshing,
Past the harvest and the vineyard's purple stain;
Let us see thy corn-pale hair the sunlight meshing,
When the sounding flails of autumn swing again.

1913

Louis V. Ledoux

WHIP-POOR-WILL

A moonlit mist the valley fills,
Though rides unseen herself the moon;
Behind me sleep majestic hills,
Before me fragrant fields of June.

Such breathless silence fills the place
I seem to hear the night moths pass;
Soft wings have touched my hands and face,
And firefly lamps above the grass

Have lit a moment, clustered white,
The mountain laurel buds that gleam
Against the velvet depth of night
Like blooms of childhood seen in dream.

So lone am I, so far from men,
My kinship with the earth I feel;
And mystic things beyond my ken
Does sybil darkness slow reveal.

I enter through a moonlit door,
Before me fragrant silence lies;
And out beyond our human shore,
Where moaning billows fall and rise,

I pass toward headlands dim and far
That girdle with white walls of foam
A land where things eternal are
That seems the soul's remembered home.

Behind me fades the earth I knew,
Beyond the world of sense am I;
From mountains of the soul I view
The things I worshipped passing by:

Before me do they come and go
Through rhythmic changes manifold
With refluent and resurgence slow
By laws established from of old.

But swift upon the silence falling
There comes a strange, familiar cry;
Persistent, iterant the calling,
And evermore without reply.

In it are life's unquenched desire
And age-old requiems of pain
Upheavals of volcanic fire,
The loneliness of midnight rain.

The silence breaks in waves of sound;
The throbbing heart of life I feel.
O ye who wingless walk the ground!
Two worlds there are: But which is real?

1918

Louis V. Ledoux

MATER DOLOROSA

O clinging hands, and eyes where sleep has set
Her seal of peace, go not from me so soon.
O little feet, take not the pathway yet;

The dust of other feet with tears is wet,
And Sorrow wanders there with slow regret;
O eager feet, take not the path so soon.

Take it not yet, for death is at the end,
And kingly death will wait until you come.
Full soon the feet of youth will pass the bend,
The eyes will see where followed footsteps wend.
Go not so soon, though death be found a friend;
For kingly death will wait until you come.

1918

Louis V. Ledoux

HE WHO HAS KNOWN A RIVER

He who has known a river in its dreaming;—
Has watched it hushed with darkness, flushed with
day;—
Has seen the waves in molten moonlight streaming
Out to a quiet bay;—

For whom, revealed beyond the river reaches,
Are islands whither sail was never blown,
Strange seas beyond the mist-enchanted beaches
Where gull has never flown:

Though he be banished, yet for him the river
Shall shine, for him shall sing and never cease;
Through all his thoughts there still shall flow forever
The moonlit waters of remembered peace.

1926

Mary Sinton Leitch

ON READING THE POETRY OF A MYSTIC

I hear a sound of waters;—not the combing
Of breakers on the beach; not wild waves foaming
On giant crags; nor yet the soft caress
Of drowsy, sun-warmed tides upon the sand;
Not any sea that washes on a land
Of human cares, of human weariness:
This music floats from some enshadowed river
That never moves—and yet flows on forever;—
The singing voice of silence that is blown
On spirit winds and heard in dreams alone.
In some far isle where never beast has trod,
Unknown of man and even unguessed of God,
The river shines in darkness, and the deep
Mysterious music lulls the soul to sleep,
While one strange bird that cannot soar nor sing
Dips in the liquid dusk a flaming wing.

1926

Mary Sinton Leitch

HEIGHT

When I was young I felt so small
And frightened, for the world was tall.

And even grasses seemed to me
A forest of immensity

Until I learned that I could grow,
A glance would leave them far below.

Spanning a tree's height with my eye,
Suddenly I soared as high,

And fixing on a star I grew,
I pushed my head against the blue!

Still, like a singing lark, I find
Rapture to leave the grass behind.

And sometimes standing in a crowd
My lips are cool against a cloud.

1928

Anne Morrow (Lindbergh)

THE CHINESE NIGHTINGALE

(A Song in Chinese Tapestries)

"How, how," he said. "Friend Chang," I said,
"San Francisco sleeps as the dead—
Ended license, lust and play:
Why do you iron the night away?
Your big clock speaks with a deadly sound,
With a tick and a wail till dawn comes round,
While the monster shadows glower and creep,
What can be better for man than sleep?"

"I will tell you a secret," Chang replied;
"My breast with vision is satisfied,
And I see green trees and fluttering wings,
And my deathless bird from Shanghai sings."
Then he lit five firecrackers in a pan,

"Pop, pop," said the firecrackers, "cra-cra-crack."
He lit a joss stick long and black.
Then the proud gray joss in the corner stirred;
On his wrist appeared a gray small bird,
And this was the song of the gray small bird:
"Where is the princess, loved forever,
Who made Chang first of the kings of men?"

And the joss in the corner stirred again;
And the carved dog, curled in his arms, awoke,
Barked forth a smoke-cloud that whirled and broke.
It piled in a maze round the ironing-place,
And there on the snowy table wide
Stood a Chinese lady of high degree,
With a scornful, witching, tea-rose face. . . .
Yet she put away all form and pride,
And laid her glimmering veil aside
With a childlike smile for Chang and me.

The walls fell back, night was aflower,
The tables gleamed in a moonlit bower,
While Chang, with a countenance carved of stone,
Ironed and ironed, all alone.

And thus she sang to the busy man Chang:

"Have you forgotten . . .

Deep in the ages, long, long ago,
I was your sweetheart, there on the sand—
Storm-worn beach of the Chinese land?
We sold our grain in the peacock town—
Built on the edge of the sea-sands brown. . . .
Built on the edge of the sea-sands brown. . . .

When all the world was drinking blood
From the skulls of men and bulls

And all the world had swords and clubs of stone,
We drank our tea in China beneath the sacred
 spice-trees,
And heard the curled waves of the harbor moan.
And this gray bird, in Love's first spring,
With a bright-bronze breast and a bronze-brown wing,
Captured the world with his caroling.
Do you remember, ages after,
At last the world we were born to own?
You were the heir of the yellow throne—
The world was the field of the Chinese man
And we were the pride of the Sons of Han?
We copied deep books and we carved in jade,
And wove blue silks in the mulberry shade. . . ."

"I remember, I remember
That Spring came on forever,
That Spring came on forever,"
Said the Chinese nightingale.

My heart was filled with marvel and dream,
Though I saw the western street-lamps gleam,
Though dawn was bringing the western day,
Though Chang was a laundryman ironing away . . .
Mingled there with the streets and alleys,
The railroad-yard and the clock-tower bright,
Demon clouds crossed ancient valleys;
Across wide lotus-ponds of light
I marked a giant firefly's flight.

And the lady, rosy-red,
Flourished her fan, her shimmering fan,
Stretched her hand toward Chang, and said:
"Do you remember,

Ages after,
Our palace of heart-red stone?
Do you remember
The little doll-faced children
With their lanterns full of moon-fire,
That came from all the empire
Honoring the throne?—
The loveliest fête and carnival
Our world had ever known?
The sages sat about us
With their heads bowed in their beards,
With proper meditation on the sight.
Confucius was not born;
We lived in those great days
Confucius later said were lived aright. . . .
And this gray bird, on that day of Spring,
With a bright-bronze breast and a bronze-brown wing,
Captured the world with his caroling.
Late at night his tune was spent.
Peasants,
Sages,
Children
Homeward went,
And then the bronze bird sang for you and me.
We walked alone. Our hearts were high and free.
I had a silvery name, I had a silvery name,
I had a silvery name—do you remember
The name you cried beside the tumbling sea?"

Chang turned not to the lady slim —
He bent to his work, ironing away;
But she was arch, and knowing and glowing,
For the bird on his shoulder spoke for him.

"Darling . . . darling . . . darling . . . darling . . ."
Said the Chinese nightingale.

The great gray joss on the rustic shelf,
Rakish and shrewd, with his collar awry,
Sang impolitely, as though by himself,
Drowning with his bellowing the nightingale's cry:
"Back through a hundred, hundred years
Hear the waves as they climb the piers,
Hear the howl of the silver seas,
Hear the thunder.
Hear the gongs of holy China
How the waves and tunes combine
In a rhythmic clashing wonder,
Incantation old and fine:

 'Dragons, dragons, Chinese dragons,
 Red firecrackers, and green firecrackers
 And dragons, dragons, Chinese dragons.' "

Then the lady, rosy-red,
Turned to her lover Chang and said:
"Dare you forget that turquoise dawn
When we stood in our mist-hung velvet lawn,
And worked a spell this great joss taught
Till a God of the Dragons was charmed and caught?
From the flag high over our palace home
He flew to our feet in rainbow-foam—
A king of beauty and tempest and thunder
Panting to tear our sorrows asunder.
A dragon of fair adventure and wonder.
We mounted the back of that royal slave
With thoughts of desire that were noble and grave.
We swam down the shore to the dragon-mountains,

We whirled to the peaks and the fiery fountains.
To our secret ivory house we were borne.
We looked down the wonderful wind-filled regions
Where the dragons darted in glimmering legions.
Right by my breast the nightingale sang;
The old rhymes rang in the sunlit mist
That we this hour regain—
Song-fire for the brain.
When my hands and my hair and my feet you kissed,
When you cried for your heart's new pain,
What was my name in the dragon-mist,
In the rings of the rainbowed rain?"

"Sorrow and love, glory and love,"
Sang the Chinese nightingale,
"Sorrow and love, glory and love,"
Sang the Chinese nightingale.

And now the joss broke in with his song:
"Dying ember, bird of Chang,
Soul of Chang, do you remember?—
Ere you returned to the shining harbor
There were pirates by ten thousand
Descended on the town
In vessels mountain-high and red and brown,
Moon-ships that climbed the storms and cut the skies.
On their prows were painted terrible bright eyes.
But I was then a wizard and a scholar and a priest;
I stood upon the sand;
With lifted hand I looked upon them
And sunk their vessels with my wizard eyes,
And the stately lacquer-gate made safe again.
Deep, deep below the bay, the seawood and the spray,

Embalmed in amber every pirate lies,
Embalmed in amber every pirate lies."

Then this did the noble lady say:
"Bird, do you dream of our home-coming day
When you flew like a courier on before
From the dragon-peak to our palace-door,
And we drove the steed in your singing path—
The ramping dragon of laughter and wrath:
And found our city all aglow,
And knighted this joss that decked it so?
There were golden fishes in the purple river
And silver fishes and rainbow fishes.
There were golden junks in the laughing river,
And silver junks and rainbow junks:
There were golden lilies by the bay and river,
And silver lilies and tiger-lilies,
And tinkling wind-bells in the gardens of the town
By the black-lacquer gate
Where walked in state
The kind king Chang
And his sweetheart mate. . . .
With his flag-born dragon
And his crown of pearl . . . and . . . jade,
And his nightingale reigning in the mulberry shade,
And sailors and soldiers on the sea-sands brown,
And priests who bowed them down to your song—
By the city called Han, the peacock town,
By the city called Han, the nightingale town,
The nightingale town."

Then sang the bird, so strangely gay,
Fluttering, fluttering, ghostly and gray,

A vague, unraveling, final tune,
Like a long unwinding silk cocoon;
Sang as though for the soul of him
Who ironed away in that bower dim:—
 "I have forgotten
 Your dragons great,
 Merry and mad and friendly and bold.
Dim is your proud lost palace-gate.
I vaguely know
There were heroes of old,
Troubles more than the heart could hold,
There were wolves in the woods
Yet lambs in the fold,
Nests in the top of the almond tree. . . .
The evergreen tree . . . and the mulberry tree.
Life and hurry and joy forgotten,
Years and years I but half-remember . . .
Man is a torch, then ashes soon,
May and June, then dead December,
Dead December, then again June.
Who shall end my dream's confusion?
Life is a loom, leaving illusion. . . .
I remember, I remember
There were ghostly veils and laces. . . .
In the showdowy bowery places. . . .
With lovers' ardent faces
Bending to one another,
Speaking each his part.
They infinitely echo
In the red cave of my heart.
'Sweetheart, sweetheart, sweetheart,'
They said to one another.
They spoke, I think, of perils past.

They spoke, I think, of peace at last.
One thing I remember;
Spring came on forever,
Spring came on forever,"
Said the Chinese nightingale.

1915

Vachel Lindsay

MADONNA OF THE EVENING FLOWERS

All day long I have been working,
Now I am tired.
I call: "Where are you?"
But there is only the oak tree rustling in the wind.
The house is very quiet,
The sun shines in on your books,
On your scissors and thimble just put down,
But you are not there.
Suddenly I am lonely:
Where are you?
I go about searching.

Then I see you,
Standing under a spire of pale blue larkspur,
With a basket of roses on your arm.
You are cool, like silver,
And you smile.
I think the Canterbury bells are playing little tunes.

You tell me that the peonies need spraying,
That the columbines have overrun all bounds,

That the pyrus japonica should be cut back and
rounded.
You tell me these things.
But I look at you, heart of silver,
White heart-flame of polished silver,
Burning beneath the blue steeples of the larkspur.
And I long to kneel instantly at your feet,
While all about us peal the loud, sweet *Te Deums* of
the Canterbury bells.

1918

Amy Lowell

FLOODGATE

Low, when the western flock is folded,
And the shepherd leans upon his staff,
Grave calm collects where lately scolded
The birds, where shook an eldritch laugh.

Then from the air the dust is driven,
And all particular expelled;
With old intent the skies are riven,
The cricket stopped, the sheep unbelled:

And straight, above the long horizon,
Slants the white moon in cold distrust,
Casting remote, deflective eyes on
Hills that fill with a silver rust.

No lamp subtends that brave illusion;
In the dark tracery of the night
The hours shiver in soft conclusion,
And the owl begins his flight.

1926

David McCord

NOCTURNE

The earth: still heavy and warm with afternoon,
Dazed by the moon

The earth, tormented with the moon's light,
Wandering in the night

Full moon, moon-rise, the old old pain
Of brightness in dilated eyes

The ache of still
Elbows leaning on the narrow sill

Of motionless cold hands upon the wet
Marble of the parapet

Of open eyelids of a child behind
The crooked glimmer of the window-blind

Of sliding, faint, remindful squares
Across the lamplight on the rocking-chairs

Why do we stand so late,
Stiff fingers on the moonlit gate?

Why do we stand
To watch so long the fall of moonlight on the sand?

What is it we cannot recall?

1926

Archibald MacLeish

THE END OF THE WORLD

Quite unexpectedly, as Vasserot
The armless ambidextrian was lighting
A match between his great and second toe
And Ralph the lion was engaged in biting
The neck of Madame Sossman while the drum
Pointed, and Teeny was about to cough
In waltz-time swinging Jocko by the thumb—
Quite unexpectedly the top blew off:

And there, there overhead, there, there hung over
Those thousands of white faces, those dazed eyes,
There in the starless dark the poise, the hover,
There with vast wings across the cancelled skies,
There in the sudden blackness the black pall
Of nothing, nothing, nothing—nothing at all.

1925

Archibald MacLeish

ARS POETICA

A poem should be palpable and mute
As a globed fruit;

Dumb
As old medallions to the thumb;

Silent as the sleeve-worn stone
Of casement ledges where the moss has grown—

A poem should be wordless
As the flight of birds.

A poem should be motionless in time
As the moon climbs;

Leaving, as the moon releases
Twig by twig the night-entangled trees—

Leaving, as the moon behind the winter leaves,
Memory by memory the mind.

A poem should be equal to:
Not true.

For all the history of grief
An empty doorway and a maple leaf;

For love
The leaning grasses and two lights above the sea—

A poem should not mean,
But be.

1926

Archibald MacLeish

WASHINGTON McNEELY

Rich, honored by my fellow citizens,
The father of many children, born of a noble mother,
All raised there
In the great mansion-house, at the edge of town.
Note the cedar-tree on the lawn!
I sent all the boys to Ann Arbor, all of the girls to
Rockford,
The while my life went on, getting more riches and
honors—
Resting under my cedar tree at evening.

The years went on.
I sent the girls to Europe;
I dowered them when married.
I gave the boys money to start in business.
They were strong children, promising as apples
Before the bitten places show.
But John fled the country in disgrace.
Jenny died in child-birth—
I sat under my cedar tree.
Harry killed himself after a debauch,
Susan was divorced—
I sat under my cedar tree.
Paul was invalidated from over study,
Mary became a recluse at home for love of a man—
I sat under my cedar tree.
All were gone, or broken-winged or devoured by life—
I sat under my cedar tree.
My mate, the mother of them, was taken—
I sat under my cedar tree,
Till ninety years were tolled.
O maternal Earth, which rocks the fallen leaf to sleep!

1915

Edgar Lee Masters

SILENCE

I have known the silence of the stars and of the sea,
And the silence of the city when it pauses,
And the silence of a man and a maid,
And the silence for which music alone finds the word,
And the silence of the woods before the winds of
spring begin,

And the silence of the sick
When their eyes roam about the room.
And I ask: For the depths
Of what use is language?
A beast of the field moans a few times
When death takes its young:
And we are voiceless in the presence of realities—
We cannot speak.

A curious boy asks an old soldier
Sitting in front of the grocery store,
"How did you lose your leg?"
And the old soldier is struck with silence,
Or his mind flies away,
Because he cannot concentrate it on Gettysburg.
It comes back jocosely
And he says, "A bear bit it off."
And the boy wonders, while the old soldier
Dumbly, feebly lives over

The flashes of guns, the thunder of cannon,
The shrieks of the slain,
And himself lying on the ground,
And the hospital surgeons, the knives,
And the long days in bed.
But if he could describe it all
He would be an artist.
But if he were an artist there would be deeper wounds
Which he could not describe.

There is the silence of a great hatred,
And the silence of a great love,
And the silence of a deep peace of mind,

And the silence of an embittered friendship,
There is the silence of a spiritual crisis,
Through which your soul, exquisitely tortured,
Comes with visions not to be uttered
Into a realm of higher life.
And the silence of the gods who understand each other
without speech,
There is the silence of defeat.
There is the silence of those unjustly punished;
And the silence of the dying whose hand
Suddenly grips yours.
There is the silence between father and son,
When the father cannot explain his life,
Even though he be misunderstood for it.

There is the silence that comes between husband and
wife.

There is the silence of those who have failed;
And the vast silence that covers
Broken nations and vanquished leaders.
There is the silence of Lincoln,
Thinking of the poverty of his youth.
And the silence of Napoleon
After Waterloo.
And the silence of Jeanne d'Arc
Saying amid the flames, "Blessèd Jesus"—
Revealing in two words all sorrow, all hope.
And there is the silence of age,
Too full of wisdom for the tongue to utter it
In words intelligible to those who have not lived
The great range of life.

And there is the silence of the dead.
If we who are in life cannot speak
Of profound experiences,
Why do you marvel that the dead
Do not tell you of death?
Their silence shall be interpreted
As we approach them.

1915

Edgar Lee Masters

HISTORY

How secretly the tide went down
Leaving behind a curious town

Of shell and stone and carved bright sand
Built upon the listless land.

A child can play here all day long
Singing softly the tide's song;

Watching the sea anemones
In pools with branching weeds like trees;

Building fine fantastic towers
In gardens stiff with shells like flowers.

And all the long gold day no thing
Will darken but a sea-gull's wing

But through the night the sea will creep
With lullabies as soft as sleep.

The tide will come like time, her breath
Of blown sea spray like dewy death.

Her rimless waves will break like hours
Upon the rosy shells, the towers,

And all that small civilization
Will be a prayer, a brief oblation

Bright in her path. The tide will take
Whatever tides and men may make.

But in the taking, with old pity
The sea will build a stranger city

Of terraced ramparts, sudden towers,
Gardens of silver tidal flowers

And steeples intricate and aery
By the lucent moon turned faery.

These to the taken town may be
The turrets of eternity.

1929

Marjorie Meeker

WALLS

Ask me why I peer
Through such a narrow cranny—

I say that sky from here
Is better than not any.

The walls that shut me in
No mind can make immortal;
My harder will shall win
The yet unthought-of portal.

Ask why I take root
Where nothing green is growing—
I say that seed and shoot
Follow the mad wind's sowing;

But where these live roots turn
And thrust, no wall shall block:
Tendrils of frailest fern
Can split a rock.

1924

Marjorie Meeker

PASSER MORTUUS EST

Death devours all lovely things:
Lesbia with her sparrow
Shares the darkness,—presently
Every bed is narrow.

Unremembered as old rain
Dries the sheer libation;
And the little petulant hand
Is an annotation.

After all, my erstwhile dear,
My no longer cherished,
Need we say it was not love,
Just because it perished?

1921

Edna St. Vincent Millay

ELAINE

Oh, come again to Astolat!
I will not ask you to be kind.
And you may go when you will go,
And I will stay behind.

I will not say how dear you are,
Or ask you if you hold me dear,
Or trouble you with things for you,
The way I did last year.

So still the orchard, Lancelot,
So very still the lake shall be,
You could not guess—though you should guess—
What is become of me.

So wide shall be the garden-walk,
The garden-seat so very wide,
You needs must think—if you should think—
The lily maid had died.

Save that, a little way away,
I'd watch you for a little while,
To see you speak, the way you speak,
And smile,—if you should smile.

1919

Edna St. Vincent Millay

ELEGY BEFORE DEATH

There will be rose and rhododendron
When you are dead and under ground;
Still will be heard from white syringas
Heavy with bees, a sunny sound;

Still will the tamaracks be raining
After the rain has ceased, and still
Will there be robins in the stubble,
Grey sheep upon the warm green hill.

Spring will not ail nor autumn falter;
Nothing will know that you are gone,—
Saving alone some sullen plough-land
None but yourself sets foot upon;

Saving the may-weed and the pig-weed
Nothing will know that you are dead,—
These, and perhaps a useless wagon
Standing beside some tumbled shed.

Oh, there will pass with your great passing
Little of beauty not your own,—
Only the light from common water,
Only the grace from simple stone!

1920

Edna St. Vincent Millay

PANDORA AND THE MOON

Minds awake in bodies that were asleep
Caused the winged troubles to be born
That made Pandora one time feel forlorn,

Because, in spite of the box, she could not keep
Her troubles there, the worrisome animalcules
Fluttered out never to be regained,
For every method of evil especially trained
And subject neither to God's nor the devil's rules.

What shall she do? Nothing; sit and ponder,
Watch the dying leaves drop from the tree
Until they all are gone and she may see
The same moon then that used to make her wonder
At the unbelievable stories she sits and reads.

And if she succeeds in that then she succeeds.

1929

Merrill Moore

HYMN FOR WATER

Go get water, water is good to drink,
Water will drown better than wine will drown
Certain sorrows that will not go down.
Water has sunk more grievances than wine
And will continue. Turn the water on,
Stick your hand in the stream; water will run

And kiss it like a dog or it will shake
It like a friend or it will tremble there
Like a woman sobbing with her hair
Falling in her face, and do not think

That water has been everything, it has,
But now is only water that will make
You whole as it is whole, clear as it is,
Immune against fate and her traitories.

1929

Merrill Moore

A FRAGMENT FROM DONNE

We say that the world is made of sea and land,
As though they were equal;
But we know that there is more sea in the Western
Than in the Eastern hemisphere.
We say that the firmament is full of stars,
As though it were equally full;
But we know that there are more stars under the
Northern
Than under the Southern pole.
We say the elements of man are misery and happiness,
As though he had an equal proportion of both,
And the days of man vicissitudinary,
As though he had as many good days as ill,
And that he lived under a perpetual equinoctial,
Night and day equal, good and ill fortune
In the same measure.
But it is far from that;
He drinks misery, and he tastes happiness;
He mows misery, and he gleans happiness;
He journeys in misery, he does but walk in happiness;
And, which is worst, his misery is positive and
dogmatical,

His happiness is but disputable and problematical.
All men call misery misery,
But happiness changes the name by the taste of man.

The above, copied fair from Donne's *Devotions*,
Is the pure paroxysm of rhetoric.
Those who have never considered
How noble is the mystery of prose composition
Let them read it aloud,
Let them savor it in their rumen.
In such writing as that
Language resumes specie payments,
And, as Benedick said, or almost said,
A whole college of wisecrackers
Cannot flout me out of my opinion.

1929

Christopher Morley

ONE TREE IN AUTUMN

So little wind would ruin all this gold:
One lightest breath out of the autumn sky,
And not a single slender stem would hold. . . .
And we should learn how flaming things must die.
Let me look long upon this, while I may,
The delicate leaf, the thin and shining stem,
In this, their hour of glory, their brief day
Of golden airs that hover over them.

And let the end come, if it must, by night,
When I have gone, and shall not come again . . .
Thinking how one tree, in that golden light,

Flames on and on, a still flame, now, as then,
Golden forever, now . . . it might be so,
This once . . . this once . . . for all I stayed to know.

1928

David Morton

SUMMER SKY

God, that a sky should be as blue as this,
As grave and beautiful and filled with light
For those far-faring birds whose way it is
To lose themselves at last in lonely flight!
And yet, so much my own, so dear, so dear
Is all a summer sky may be or do,
That though I shut my eyes it still is here,
As beautiful as ever, and as blue.
There, with its hidden stars, its lonely birds,
And here, in me, no less, by day, by night,
Aye, even in this poem as I write,
Spreading its blue again above these words—
So that I half expect, as day declines,
To see the stars look out among these lines.

1926

David Morton

VISITATION

Here where these long, slow lights of spring are falling
In soft and dreamy splendors over the ground,
And birds along the darkening wood are calling,
Less like a sound than like a hush of sound—

Something comes back that was not here before,
Lonely and shy and lovely with no name;
Some joy I had, some heartbreak that I wore,
Ghostwise returns for this too ghostly fame.

Now all the sadness that my heart has known,
And all the briefest joy that could not stay—
The sighs and laughter that my breath had sown,
Find here again a hushed and lonely way
Through skies of dreamy splendor like their own,
And fields as sad, as beautiful, as they.

1927

David Morton

BECAUSE MY GRIEF SEEMS QUIET AND APART

Because my grief seems quiet and apart,
Think not for such a reason it is less.
True sorrow makes a silence in the heart,
Joy has its friends, but grief its loneliness.
The wound that tears too readily confess,
Can mended be, by fortune or by art,
But there are woes no medicine can dress,
As there are wounds that from the spirit start.
So do not wonder that I do not weep,
Or say my anguish is too little shown.
There is a quiet here, there is a sleep,
There is a peace that I have made my own.
Man by himself goes down into the deep,
Certain, and unbefriended, and alone.

1925

Robert Nathan

JOURNEYMAN

Love is a reaper, too, like death
With a scythe for the mowing.
He cares not what he takes for his tithe
Or of whose sowing.

Silent, complacent, he stands for a breath
With the field at his feet,
And the grain has only the sun for a shield
And the shining heat.

But when he has laid soft swath on swath
He is seen to tire.
How came he in this field to glean
And in whose hire?

1925

Louise Townsend Nicholl

REFRACTION

Within the mirror of an oval dream
Figures were pictured whitely in a stream.
Water in dream and in the stream reflection;
How much of it was real, how much deflection?
Was beauty blurred, or cameo'd the clearer,
For being seen within the double mirror?
The quivering water-figures where they sank
Were lovelier than those upon the bank.

Image in image toward infinity—
Then in some ultimate mirror would we see

Beauty herself? Or what we wish she were?
Be it herself or only what she seem,
Lovely distortion, still I would prefer
The medium of water and of dream,
Depth within depth to bevel and to bend—
Since I am also one who must depend
On sleep's immersion for my deepest sight
And like a stick in water lean on light.

1927

Louise Townsend Nicholl

SONG

Ebb on with me across the sunset tide
And float beyond the waters of the world,
The light of evening slipping from thy side,
Thy softened voice in waves of silence furled.

Flow on into the flaming morning wine,
Drowning the land in color. Then on high
Rise in thy candid innocence and shine
Like to a poplar straight against the sky.

1915

Edward J. O'Brien

THE PATH

He followed the curve of the sunrise
Till he came to the gap of the hill,
Where the golden track to the morning
Beckoned, very still.

And over that ancient pathway,
In the midst of flooding foam,
He met the star-eyed shepherd
Bringing his slow flock home.

Up through the gates of magic
They drifted, one by one,
As the little white clouds on the hillside
Drifted before the sun.

Softly, before their shepherd,
They paced down the grassy rim,
And the golden track to the morning
Was no longer the way for him.

1918

Edward J. O'Brien

TRINITY

Wisdom, I think, is made of these
Three discoveries.

First, the raw incredible ache
Of a new heartbreak.

Bitter this—but bitterer far
Learning how brief all heartbreaks are,
When the hurt heals over and leaves no scar.

And last, that love full-feasted even
Is somewhat short of utter heaven.

Wisdom is wrought of these
Three certainties.

1928

Ted Olson

MOODS

I

AN ASTRONOMER

On a lone hillside
A Navajo shepherd
Wrapt in his blanket,
Hugged his knees,
Dreamed into the night—
A wisp of a crescent,
A sky full of stars—
In his thought
He was asking:
"Do my lanterns
Shine up to the stars?"

II

A VASE OF CHINESE IVORY

In the museum
It had no name:
It was only the life work
Of one almond-eyed heathen—

Just one of a million!
Look closer
And you will see
A soul,
Unique and beautifull

III

MESSAGES

He plodded along
The deep-rutted road,
The old farmer,
Face as red as sumach,
Wind-colored;
Happy.
The bee-drone hum
Of wires overhead
Was song and laughter to him.
Yet the wires were laden
With messages of strife, and sorrow,
and sin.

IV

THE HEIGHTS

Alone,
On a high mountain trail;
I drew strength from out the sky;
My thoughts went out
Like my shadow at sunset:
I grew great as my shadow at sunset.

SOLITUDE

Youth!
If there be madness
In your soul,
Go to the mountain solitudes
Where you can grow up
To your madness.

1916

David O'Neil

THE UNQUIET

He thought to solve
The unquiet of his heart,
In the stillness of solitude;
But the ticking of the clock
Penetrated the silence;
Then song-sparrows sang
In the evergreens at his window;
And there came the ache
Of a heavily loaded wagon
Straining
Up the hill;
And the voices of things in his room
Clamored,
Till he sought the noise of the city
For its silence.

1918

David O'Neil

TO A DOGWOOD IN SUMMER

They tell me that essential you
Is just essential me—
Electrons shifting, you'd be man
And I a twinkling tree.

That could have happened easily
Odd twenty years ago,
But you, to match me, must have worn
Your moonlight and your snow.

1926

William Alexander Percy

HERE LIES A LADY

Here lies a lady of beauty and high degree.
Of chills and fever she died, of fever and chills,
The delight of her husband, her aunts, an infant of
three,
And of medicos marveling sweetly on her ills.

For either she burned, and her confident eyes would
blaze,
And her fingers fly in a manner to puzzle their heads—
What was she making? Why, nothing; she sat in a maze
Of old scraps of laces, snipped into curious shreds—

Or this would pass, and the light of her fire decline
Till she lay discouraged and cold as a thin stalk white
and blown,

And would not open her eyes, to kisses, to wine.
The sixth of these states was her last; the cold settled
down.

Sweet ladies, long may ye bloom, and toughly I hope
ye may thole,
But was she not lucky? In flowers and lace and
mourning,
In love and great honor we bade God rest her soul
After six little spaces of chill, and six of burning.

1923

John Crowe Ransom

BELLS FOR JOHN WHITESIDES' DAUGHTER

There was such speed in her little body,
And such lightness in her footfall,
It is no wonder that her brown study
Astonishes us all.

Her wars were bruited in our high window.
We looked among orchard trees and beyond,
Where she took arms against her shadow,
Or harried unto the pond

The lazy geese, like a snow cloud
Dripping their snow on the green grass,
Tricking and stopping, sleepy and proud,
Who cried in goose, Alas,

For the tireless heart within the little
Lady with rod that made them rise
From their noon apple-dreams, and scuttle
Goose-fashion under the skies!

But now go the bells, and we are ready;
In one house we are sternly stopped
To say we are vexed at her brown study,
Lying so primly propped.

1924

John Crowe Ransom

OLD SAUL

I cannot think of any word
To make it plain to you,
How white a thing the hawthorn bush
That delicately blew

Within a crook of Tinges Lane;
Each May Day there it stood;
And lit a flame of loveliness
For the small neighborhood.

So fragile-white a thing it was,
I cannot make it plain.
Or the sweet fumbling of the bees,
Like the break in a rain.

Old Saul lived near. And this his life:—
To cobble for his bread;
To mourn a tall son lost at sea;
A daughter worse than dead.

And so, in place of all his lack,
He set the hawthorn tree;
Made it his wealth, his mirth, his god,
His Zion to touch and see.

Born English he. Down Tinges Lane
His lad's years came and went,
He saw out there behind his thorn,
A hundred thorns of Kent.

At lovers slipping through the dusk,
He shook a lover's head:
Grudged them each flower. It was too white
For any but the dead.

Once on a blurred, wet, silver day,
He said to two or three:
"Folks, when I go, pluck yonder bloom,
That I may take with me."

But it was winter when he went,
The road wind-wrenched and torn;
They laid upon his coffin lid
A wreath made all of thorn.

1925

Lizette Woodworth Reese

A WINDY NIGHT

Should Ellen from the rectory come,
Or from the grey farms Nan or Mark,
Then will they find my house gone dumb,
Drained to the ribs of all but dark.

Ellen, white hyacinth on its stalk,
Knows parish-news from shop to stall;
Smelling of apples, Nan will talk
Of weathers, crops; Mark, not at all.

Not I that shape there in the night,
Slumped down within the knobbed green chair,
That thing left in the fagotlight,
To mumble welcome, stare and stare.

Orion hunts, and with him I
Beyond the pools of ghosts and back;
The Dead troop out as we go by,
And point us down the whirling track.

1927

Lizette Woodworth Reese

A SCENT

Be you shepherd with your sheep,
Or a bishop with a hood
As scarlet as haws
In a tumbling wood,

There will come to you a thing—
And come to you it must—
That will cast you down, down,
As low as the dust.

An odor will go by,
Of satiny pears that drop
Behind a cracked high wall
To be sold in a shop;

Or of the wild mint flower,
Sharp honey and to spare;
Or the billow of gay skirts
Down a vanished stair.

It will cast you down, down,
In a sudden rout;
Be you shepherd, be you priest,
It will tear your heart out.

1927

Lizette Woodworth Reese

THRIFT

A star proves never traitor, and a weed—
Even that vetch obscurely purple there—
Can hoard such loyalies against your need,
You may go rich, although the world go bare.
A blackbird's whistle over the low grass,
Is but another wealth; so are these too:—
The old rememberings that start and pass
At its short music, when the year is new.
If stars you love, and all their like, then know
Your love will be a thrift to set you clear
Of beggary and whining at a door.
You change; life changes; it is ever so;
But these last on from whirling year to year:
Learn God of them, and add Him to your store.

1927

Lizette Woodworth Reese

SHEPHERDING

Who is more tender than a shepherd is,
The intimacy of weathers in his face?
A fold, a serviceable staff is his:
Out in the park or some like country place,
Have I not seen one, in a golden air,
On golden road, driving his flock before,
A figure tall, hereditary, spare,
And longed to follow to that kindly door?
It must be that some rich, forgotten thing
Chokes at the heart at sight of these who pass;
Lost dreams gather about us in the grass;
And when this happens, for a moment we fling
Our gold down, as it were but hoarded glass,
And run back to our ancient shepherding.

1927

Lizette Woodworth Reese

ANNUNCIATION

But for the violets . . .
and earth a gigantic bulb battened down
with stone . . .
violets
at which the wind
makes little shambling rushes,
unsteady wind,
milk-warm and dewy at the mouth,
stumbling and rising again,
smelling of the violets . . .
and but for the wind

scattering
such scented hearsay,
one might not veer
on this unleavened stone
to the sharp pull of earth
at tension with the violets—
one might hurry on unknowing over the cancelled
 spring,
spring . . . horned green
and curly as a ram's head . . .
desperately butting against the concrete.

1926

Lola Ridge

AFTER STORM

Was there a wind?
Tap . . . tap . . .
Night pads upon the snow
With moccasined feet,
And it is still . . . so still . . .
An eagle's feather
Might fall like a stone.

Could there have been a storm,
Mad-tossing golden mane
 on the neck of the wind—
Tearing up the sky,
 loose-flapping like a tent
 about the ice-capped stars?

Cool, sheer and motionless,
The frosted pines
Are jewelled with a million flaming points,
That fling their beauty up in long white sheaves
Till they catch hands with stars.
Could there have been a wind
That haled them by the hair,
And blinding
Blue-forked
Flowers of the lightning
In their leaves?

Tap . . . tap . . .
Slow-ticking centuries . . .
Soft as bare feet upon the snow . . .
Faint . . . lulling as heard rain
 upon heaped leaves . . .
So silence builds her wall
 about a dream impaled.

1921

Lola Ridge

KARMA

Christmas was in the air and all was well
With him, but for a few confusing flaws
In divers of God's images. Because
A friend of his would neither buy nor sell,
Was he to answer for the axe that fell?
He pondered; and the reason for it was,
Partly, a slowly freezing Santa Claus
Upon the corner, with his beard and bell.

Acknowledging an improvident surprise,
He magnified a fancy that he wished
The friend whom he had wrecked were here again.
Not sure of that, he found a compromise;
And from the fulness of his heart he fished
A dime for Jesus who had died for men.

1924

Edwin Arlington Robinson

FLAMMONDE

The man Flammonde, from God knows where,
With firm address and foreign air,
With news of nations in his talk
And something royal in his walk,
With glint of iron in his eyes,
But never doubt, nor yet surprise,
Appeared, and stayed, and held his head
As one by kings accredited.

Erect, with his alert repose
About him, and about his clothes,
He pictured all tradition hears
Of what we owe to fifty years.
His cleansing heritage of taste
Paraded neither want nor waste;
And what he needed for his fee
To live, he borrowed graciously.

He never told us what he was,
Or what mischance, or other cause,
Had banished him from better days

To play the Prince of Castaways.
Meanwhile he played surpassing well
A part, for most, unplayable;
In fine, one pauses, half afraid
To say for certain that he played.

For that, one may as well forego
Conviction as to yes or no;
Nor can I say just how intense
Would then have been the difference
To several, who, having striven
In vain to get what he was given,
Would see the stranger taken on
By friends not easy to be won.

Moreover many a malcontent
He soothed and found munificent;
His courtesy beguiled and foiled
Suspicion that his years were soiled;
His mien distinguished any crowd,
His credit strengthened when he bowed;
And women, young and old, were fond
Of looking at the man Flammonde.

There was a woman in our town
On whom the fashion was to frown;
But while our talk renewed the tinge
Of a long-faded scarlet fringe,
The man Flammonde saw none of that,
And what he saw we wondered at—
That none of us, in her distress,
Could hide or find our littleness.

There was a boy that all agreed
Had shut within him the rare seed
Of learning. We could understand
But none of us could lift a hand.
The man Flammonde appraised the youth,
And told a few of us the truth:
And thereby, for a little gold,
A flowered future was unrolled.

There were two citizens who fought
For years and years, and over nought;
They made life awkward for their friends,
And shortened their own dividends.
The man Flammonde said what was wrong
Should be made right; nor was it long
Before they were again in line,
And had each other in to dine.

And these I mention are but four
Of many out of many more.
So many for them. But what of him—
So firm in every look and limb?
What small satanic sort of kink
Was in his brain? What broken link
Withheld him from the destinies
That came so near to being his?

What was he, when we came to sift
His meaning, and to note the drift
Of incommunicable ways
That make us ponder while we praise?
Why was it that his charm revealed
Somehow the surface of a shield?

What was it that we never caught?
What was he, and what was he not?

How much it was of him we met
We cannot ever know; nor yet
Shall all he gave us quite atone
For what was his, and his alone;
Nor need we now, since he knew best,
Nourish an ethical unrest:
Rarely at once will nature give
The power to be Flammonde and live.

We cannot know how much we learn
From those who never will return,
Until a flash of unforeseen
Remembrance falls on what has been.
We've each a darkening hill to climb;
And this is why, from time to time
In Tilbury Town, we look beyond
Horizons for the man Flammonde.

1915

Edwin Arlington Robinson

DARK HALO

Death is the shadow of the hawk
Above us always as we walk;
And we are rabbits in a meadow
That play beneath the great wings' shadow

We nibble, nibble . . . and forget
The seal of darkness on us set.
Or one of us, it may be, dozes . . .
Or two touch little twitching noses.

Meanwhile above us evermore
The terrible wings of darkness soar;
And the plumed panther of the air
Forever sees us blank and bare.

The yellow, cold, unwinking eyes
Are always on us from the skies;
The talons are alert to stir
Implacable in blood-dabbled fur.

Yet he alone is man who dares
Look up and see the death that stares:
Yes, it is grandeur, majesty,
And triumph, to look up—and see!

And more: It brings our transient course
The shock of doom, the seal of force,
And makes even lives of men like me
A Sophoclean tragedy.

The challenge of the shadow flings
Strength on us, like archangels' wings:
It makes our sordidness sublime—
Eternity rebuking Time!

1928

E. Merrill Root

DUST

Agatha Morley
All her life
Grumbled at dust
Like a good wife.

Dust on a table,
Dust on a chair,
Dust on a mantel
She couldn't bear.

She forgave faults
In man and child
But a dusty shelf
Would set her wild.

She bore with sin
Without protest,
But dust thoughts preyed
Upon her rest.

Agatha Morley
Is sleeping sound
Six feet under
The mouldy ground.

Six feet under
The earth she lies
With dust at her feet
And dust in her eyes.

1927

Sydney King Russell

JOHN EVERYMAN

In carrying more than mortals can
John was an ordinary man—
Of cares he was a caravan.
He staggered onward in the sun;
But for his load, he might have run.
How shamblingly his pace advanced
When joyously he might have danced!
He reached the wood at last; and then
They ambushed him—God's highwaymen!

Ah, when he reached the wood at last
Delicious rapine followed fast—
Pillage divine, celestial rape
From which no mortal could escape.
John shivered, trembled, cried, and pled.
Their purpose steeped his heart in dread—
Had he a chance, he would have fled.

Burdened, disarmed, he faced about:
A tall oak robbed him of his doubt;
Huge elms—those burly buccaneers—
Despoiled him of his priceless fears;
A cypress stole his fine disdain;
A dewdrop plundered him of pain;
The agate of his heart, they say,
A sunbeam melted quite away;
A laurel leaned to him and took
His aching eye, his anxious look;
A sunset-coroneted pine
Soon made him all his pride resign.

Disaster on disaster came!
Into her secret halls of flame—
The stately sorrow that he kept
Closest his heart—a wild rose swept.
His anger—he was sore beset—
He yielded to a violet;
Surrendered to a spray of rue
The dream that never could come true;
He gave sick hope that had been sleeping
Unto a greensward's quiet keeping;
And with a virgin lily left
A love whose heart long since was cleft.

Pillaged and joyous, ruined, glad,
Free, naked, reft of all he had,
John Everyman from yonder wood
Carried no more than mortal should;
Carried a heart for life made strong,
A hope, a faith, a friend, a song.

*O traveler somewhere on the way,
May God's good thieves your path waylay—
And this with all my heart I pray.*

1926

Archibald Rutledge

AUTUMN MOVEMENT

I cried over beautiful things, knowing no beautiful
thing lasts.

The field of cornflower yellow is a scarf at the neck of
the copper sunburned woman, the mother of
the year, the taker of seeds.

The northwest wind comes and the yellow is torn full
of holes, new beautiful things come in the first
spit of snow on the northwest wind, and the
old things go, not one lasts.

1919

Carl Sandburg

COOL TOMBS

When Abraham Lincoln was shoveled into the tombs,
he forgot the copperheads and the assassin . . .
in the dust, in the cool tombs.

And Ulysses Grant lost all thought of con men and
Wall Street, cash and collateral turned ashes
. . . in the dust, in the cool tombs.

Pocahontas' body, lovely as a poplar, sweet as a red
haw in November or a pawpaw in May, did
she wonder? does she remember? . . . in the dust,
in the cool tombs?

Take any streetful of people buying clothes and
groceries, cheering a hero or throwing confetti
and blowing tin horns . . . tell me if the lovers
are losers . . . tell me if any get more than the
lovers . . . in the dust . . . in the cool tombs.

1917

Carl Sandburg

ARTICULATE THRUSH

Oh, you and I, wild thrush—we share
The glory of this mountain slope:
Its hallowed dusk, its fragrant air,
Its haze of heliotrope.

We know the high serenity
Of coming night: of the cool blue star,
Of the dewy tinkling bells from the lee
Of the hills where the cattle are.

Not mine, but yours, the power to make
Articulate the prayer that wells
In every heart this hour, the ache
Of beauty in these dells.

Chant then, O Bird! Tilt back your bill;
Perched on the balsam's nodding cones,
From out the plum-blue shadows spill
Your pebbly silver tones.

Speak to whatever Cosmic Power
Conjured to surging ecstasy
This day, its fire and dew and flower;
And speak, sweet bird, for me.

1927

Lew Sarett

MOUNTAIN HAMLET

Wide-eyed all night in the weatherworn inn,
As the bleak winds rattled on the rain-trough's tin,

Deep in a feather-bed I tossed in the gloom
That dripped from the walls of the attic room.

There was never a sound in the mouldering house
But the wail of the wind and the squeak of a mouse
Eerily scampering under the gable . . .
Over the rafter . . . down on the table.

Never a sound but the slow tick-tock
From the laggard tongue of the grandfather's clock,
The bronchial whirl and the dubious chime
Of the old bronze bells as they croaked the time.

Remote I was from the face of a friend,
In a hamlet tucked where the mountains bend
A gnarly arm round a lonely sweep
So desolate that I could not sleep.

Restless, I crept to the window-sill:
The ice-browed cabins under the hill,
Forlorn, abandoned, huddled in a row
Like frozen ptarmigan squat in the snow.

The tavern lamplight, leaning on the blizzard,
Hooded in white, was a hunched-up wizard,
With lean yellow fingers that conjured hosts
Of shambling shadows and slim gray ghosts.

I groped my way to the old bedstead
And stared at the portrait over my head:
The long gone father of my host who was sleeping,
Snoring at ease, while the hours were creeping.

Through Gunflint Pass, with his old ox-cart,
He had reached this glade; with a resolute heart
He had swung his ax through the forest halls,
Had hewn the logs of these homestead walls.

Here in the hills, for seventy years,
This gaunt bellwether of the pioneers
Had browsed content, and with placid eye
Had mulled his cud as the world rushed by.

And here, with his paunch and his apple-like face,
My host, his son—the last of his race—
Had slept untroubled by the slow tick-tock
And the dull bronze bells of his father's clock;

Had lived content, like his pioneer sire,
With his hickory-chair and his wide hearth-fire,
His cobwebbed kegs in the cellar's damp,
His feather-beds and his tavern-lamp.

I burrowed in my bed when a windy gust
Clattered on the panes with a brittle white dust,
As the keen wind fumbled the flapping shutter
And moaned like a cat in the loose rain-gutter.

Soundless the mountain, soundless the wood,
Except for a lynx in the neighborhood
Who shivered the night with a frozen wail
When the wind's teeth raked him from muzzle to tail.

Faintly I caught the struggle and strain,
The melancholy cry of a railway train
Climbing the Gunflint, high and higher,
The belly-born tones of the West Coast Flier.

Nearer the grinding clang and rattle
Of the transcontinental streaming to Seattle,
Whistling as she flew, "Make way! make way!—
For another tribe and another day!"

Laden with vendors of motor-cars,
Radio experts and cinema stars,
With railway presidents, governors,
Airplane mechanics, and realtors.

Like a red-tailed rocket in the midnight's black,
It crashed through the hamlet; and left in its track
The blinking eye of a signal-light
As its cloud of glory vanished in night.

The faint gold tones of the mellow bell—
Like the music of the sea held in a shell—
Trembled on the hills, so cupped and hollowed
They echoed the echoes. Silence followed.

Oh, never a sound but the groan of the floor—
Two ghostly feet at the innkeeper's door . . .
Pacing the room of my host who sighed
And rolled on the bed where his father had died.

Never a sound but a squeak on the rafter,
The windmill's creak and the wind's wild laughter,
The interminable tick, the inevitable tock
From the thick halt tongue of the grandfather's clock.

1929

Lew Sarett

" . . . AS THE VIOLETS CAME "

Some love may come like a call to wars
In a gale of glory that blinds and thrills;
But my love came like the breaking stars
In a sudden hush on the summer hills.

Some love may come like a storm that swells
In the August sky as the daylight wanes;
But my love came like the sound of bells
The winds have drifted across the plains.

Some love may come like a flame that's drawn
Through ruins crackling across the night;
But my love came like a breaking dawn
On the daisy hills where the world is white.

For love, as they say, may come like flame,
Or a challenge gay, or a wind untrue;
But my love came as the violets came
In the quiet fields when the spring was new.

1921

George Brandon Saul

HOT AFTERNOONS HAVE BEEN IN MONTANA

Quiet and green was the grass of the field,
The sky was whole in brightness,

And O, a bird was flying, high, there in the sky,
So gently, so carelessly and fairly.
Here, once, Indians shouted in battle,
And moaned after it.
Here were cries, yells, night, and the moon over these
men,
And the men making the cries and yells; it was
Hundreds of years ago, when monks were in Europe,
Monks in cool, black monasteries, thinking of God,
studying Virgil;
Monks were in Europe, a land having an ocean,
miles of water, between
It and this land, America, possessing Montana.
(New York, Vermont, New Mexico, America has too.)
Indians, Indians went through Montana,
Thinking, feeling, trying pleasurably to live.
This land, shone on by the sun now, green, quiet now,
Was under their feet, this time; we live now and it is
hundreds of years after.
Montana, thou art, and I say thou art, as once monks
said of God,
And thought, too: Thou art.
Thou hast Kansas on thy side;
Kansas is in the newspapers, talked of by men;
Idaho thou hast, and far away, Singapore, Alabama,
Brazil.
That bird over this green, under that sun, God, how
sweet and graceful it is!
Could we ever do that? Machines that fly are clumsy
and ugly;
Birds go into the air so softly, so fairly; see its curves;
Earth!
In Montana, men eat and have bodies paining them

Because they eat.

Kansas, with Montana, in America, has, too, men
pained by their eating;

So has England, with Westminster Abbey, where poets
lie, dead now;

O, what their poetry can do; what poetry can do.

There is the brain of man, a soft, puzzling, weak affair;

Lord, the perfect green of this meadow.

Look at the pure heat and light of that big sun,

And the cleanness of the sky.

Night comes, night has come.

Was not Montana here in the Middle Ages, when old
Rome was at its oldest, when

Aristotle wrote,

In Greece, Greece by the Aegean, with the
Mediterranean near?

Indians killed each other here,

With the moon over them.

Indians killed each other near Cape Cod, near Boston,
in Louisiana, too.

It was before white men came from England, to see
them; the white men were seen by them.

Snows have been here, in Montana, while the Indians
have been.

Girls are in Helena, mines are in Helena,

Men work in them painfully and long for the bodies
of girls;

And long for much more that is in the world, in thee,
Earth.

Men work, suffer, are little, ugly, too.

O, mountains are in Montana,

The Rocky Mountains are in California, Utah,
Colorado, Montana.

Indians were here, too, by rivers, in these mountains,
lived in mountains.
Europe has its Paris, and men live there; Stendhal,
Rabelais, Gautier, Hume were there.
God, what is it man can do?
There are millions of men in the world, and each is
one man,
Each is one man by himself, taking care of himself all
the time, and changing other men and being
changed by them;
The quiet of this afternoon is strange, haunting,
awful;
Hear that buzzing in the hot grass, coming from live
things; and those crows' cries from somewhere;
There is a sluggish, sad brook near here, too.
The bird is gone now, so graceful, fair as it was,
And the sky has nothing but the brightness of air in it.
The clean color of air.
The sun makes it be afternoon here;
In Paris and Sumatra, it is night;
Dark Malays are in lands by the Indian Ocean,
An ocean there is we call the Indian;
Men went to these Malays near the Indian Ocean,
in the eighteenth century, in frigates and
ships-of-the-line;
And men living here are Indians, too.
O, the cry of the Indian in battle, hundreds of years
ago, in woods, in plains, in mountains;
War might have been seen once in this meadow, now
in green, now hot;
Hundreds of years ago it might have been seen, and
tens of years, and a thousand.

There was love among Indians; there is love in Paris,
Moscow, London, and New York.
Men have been in war, ever,
And men have thought, and written books, about war,
love, and mind.
Mist comes in this earth,
And there have been sad, empty, pained, longing souls
going through mist.
O, the green in mist that is to be seen in the world.
And time goes on, the world is moving, all of it, so
time goes on in this world.
It is now a hot, quiet afternoon in Montana.
Montana with the Rocky Mountains;
Virginia with the Allegany Mountains:
(Indians ambushed Braddock in the Allegany
Mountains; the woods, once quiet, once dark,
Sounded sharply and deeply with cries, moans, and
shots; Washington was there;
Washington Irving wrote of Washington, so did
Frenchmen who knew Voltaire;
In 1755, Braddock was ambushed and died, and then,
in Paris men and women wrote of philosophy
who were elegant, witty and thought spirit was
of matter; say Diderot, Helvetius, and Madame
du Deffand; Samuel Johnson was in London
then; Pitt was in England; men lived in
Montana, Honolulu, Argentina and near the
Cape of Good Hope; O, life of man, O, Earth;
Earth, again and again!)
And there have been hot afternoons, all through time,
history, as men say;
Hot afternoons have been in Montana.

There have been hot afternoons, and quiet, soft, lovely
twilights; Gray, Collins, Milton wrote of these;
There have been hot afternoons in quiet English
churchyards, and hot afternoons in America, in
Montana; and green everywhere and bright sky;
there are deserts in Africa, America, and
Australia;
Clear air is healthful; men go to Colorado, near
Wyoming, near Montana in the mountains,
sick men go to the mountains where Indians
once lived, fought and killed each other.
O, the love of bodies, O, the pains of bodies on hot,
quiet afternoons, everywhere in the world.
Men work in factories on hot afternoons, now in
Montana, and now in New Hampshire; walk
the streets of Boston on hot afternoons;
Novels, stupid and forgot, have been written in
afternoons;
Matinées of witty comedies in London and New York
are in afternoons;
Indians roamed here, in this green field, on quiet, hot
afternoons, in years now followed by hundreds
of years.
Hot afternoons are real; afternoons are; places, things,
thoughts, feelings are; poetry is;
The world is waiting to be known; Earth, what it has
in it! The past is in it:
All words, feelings, movements, words, bodies, clothes,
girls, trees, stones, things of beauty, books,
desires are in it; and all are to be known;
Afternoons have to do with the whole world;
And the beauty of mind, feeling knowingly the world!

The world of girls' beautiful faces, bodies and clothes,
quiet afternoons, graceful birds, great words,
tearful music, mind-joying poetry, beautiful
livings, loved things, known things: a to-be-used
and known and pleasure-to-be giving world.

1925

Eli Siegel

MEASURE ME, SKY!

Measure me, sky!
Tell me I reach by a song
Nearer the stars:
I have been little so long!

Weigh me, high wind!
What will your wild scales record?
Profit of pain,
Joy by the weight of a word!

Horizon, reach out!
Catch at my hands, stretch me taut,
Rim of the world:
Widen my eyes by a thought!

Sky, be my depth,
Wind, be my width and my height,
World, my heart's span:
Loneliness, wings for my flight!

1921

Leonora Speyer

SWANS

With wings held close and slim neck bent,
Along dark water scarcely stirred,
Floats, shimmering and indolent,
The alabaster bird.

Its mate floats near, the lovely one;
They lie like snow, cool flake on flake,
Mild breast on breast of dimmer swan
Dim-mirrored in the lake.

They glide . . . and glides that white embrace,
Shy bird to bird, with never a sound;
Thus leaned Narcissus toward his face,
Leaned lower till he drowned.

Leda leaned thus, subdued and spent
Beneath those vivid wings of love . . .
Along the lake, proud, indolent,
The vast birds scarcely move.

Silence is wisdom. Then how wise
Are these whose song is but their knell!
A god did well to choose this guise.
Truly a god did well.

1929

Leonora Speyer

THE GLASS OF TIME

I know a lake high up among the hills—
A pure tranquility where shadows rest,

Accepting to its acquiescent breast
The silver-throated rills.

A solitary killdee, running fleet,
(The one unquiet thing that meets the sight)
Slips like a bead along the thread of light
Where land and water meet.

Silent around the forest ramparts press,
Walling with emerald its quietude,
Ere Evening and her mystery o'erbrood
That hush and holiness.

There secretly the large-eyed stag is found,
And there at dawn the stealing mist that finds
Upon its arras the delaying winds,
Too ghostly for a sound.

Lucid, serene, untroubled by a wind,
The noonday crystal slumbers, cool and deep,
Calm as the features of a nun asleep,
Whom not a dream shall find.

Elusively, a sense of things unheard
Awakes, and is forgotten as it dies.
The afternoon is great with peace. Then cries,
Far off, and once, a bird.

The slow-winged clouds pass in unhastening flight
To some far haven of Hesperian ease,
Paving that court of chill translucencies
With alabaster light.

Therein, as in her sky, the moon shall melt,
The stars find sanctuary for a space,
Till morning, uncompassionate, efface
The palace where they dwelt.

There if one come, he fills that placid glass
With azure glory of the mirrored sky.
Fading, the vision and the glory die
With him whose footsteps pass. . . .

Lake of the spirit, even so shall cease
(A pale mirage in heavens deep and far)
The face of Beauty, passing like a star
From peace to vaster peace.

1917

George Sterling

PETER QUINCE AT THE CLAVIER

I

Just as my fingers on these keys
Make music, so the self-same sounds
On my spirit make a music, too.

Music is feeling, then, not sound;
And thus it is that what I feel,
Here in this room, desiring you,

Thinking of your blue-shadowed silk,
Is music. It is like the strain
Waked in the elders by Susanna:

Of a green evening, clear and warm,
She bathed in her still garden, while
The red-eyed elders, watching felt

The basses of their beings throb
In witching chords, and their thin blood
Pulse pizzicati of Hosanna.

II

In the green water, clear and warm,
Susanna lay,
She searched
The touch of springs,
And found
Concealed imaginings.
She sighed,
For so much melody.

Upon the bank, she stood
In the cool
Of spent emotions.
She felt, among the leaves,
The dew
Of old devotions.

She walked upon the grass,
Still quavering.
The winds were like her maids
On timid feet,
Fetching her woven scarves,
Yet wavering.

A breath upon her hand
Muted the night.
She turned—
A cymbal crashed,
And roaring horns.

III

Soon, with a noise like tambourines,
Came her attendant Byzantines.

They wondered why Susanna cried
Against the elders by her side;

And as they whispered, the refrain
Was like a willow swept by rain.

Anon, their lamps' uplifted flame
Revealed Susanna and her shame.

And then, the simpering Byzantines
Fled, with a noise like tambourines.

IV

Beauty is momentary in the mind—
The fitful tracing of a portal;
But in the flesh it is immortal.

The body dies; the body's beauty lives.
So evenings die, in their green going,
A wave, interminably flowing.
So gardens die, their meek breath scenting

The cowl of Winter, done repenting.
So maidens die, to the auroral
Celebration of a maiden's choral.

Susanna's music touched the bawdy strings
Of those white elders; but, escaping,
Left only Death's ironic scraping.
Now, in its immortality, it plays
On the clear viol of her memory,
And makes a constant sacrament of praise.

1915

Wallace Stevens

HURT NOT THE PROUD

Hurt not the proud for they shall live
Enduring strangely quiet alone;
They who were proud words in flesh
Shall surely carve proud words in stone.

1929

Jesse Stuart

MEASUREMENT

Stars and atoms have no size,
They only vary in men's eyes.

Men and instruments will blunder
Calculating things of wonder.

A seed is just as huge a world
As any ball the sun has hurled.

Stars are quite as picayune
As any splinter of the moon.

Time is but a vague device;
Space can never be precise;

Stars and atoms have a girth,
Small as zero, ten times Earth.

There is, by God's swift reckoning
A universe in everything.

1928

A. M. Sullivan

FOR A SHY LOVER

If you will poise your forefoot in my pool,
I will not loose a ripple, Beautiful.
Crackle the fern-stems, arch aloft and stare,
See! there's no fright for you, anywhere.
A leaf shall not lift, nor a shade shake
You and your shy love away from my lake.
I know the noon is ablaze for you,
This gaunt forest, a maze for you.
Kneel near this drop of water on stone.
No one comes plunging. You are alone.
Today I am opal, tinged with blue,
My color deepens with the glassy heat,
And I listen for hoofs. Am I timid, too?

Noon is my enemy! Thrust in your feet!
Trample this silver, trample this sand,
I will not startle you, Little One; stand
Slim as the larch, there, I'll not take
Even your shade to the naked ache
Of my lessening waters. If you lean,
Another faun, like you, but green
Will flick his ears and curve his throat,
His shadow hoof will lift between
These pebble-splotches. Will you float,
Mingle and drowse and touch me, Beautiful?
If you come down some blown noon to my pool,
I will be quiet, I will be cool.

1922

Genevieve Taggard

TRY TROPIC

(Of the Properties of Nature for Healing an Illness)

Try tropic for your balm,
Try storm,
And after storm, calm.
Try snow of heaven, heavy, soft, and slow,
Brilliant and warm.
Nothing will help, and nothing do much harm.

Drink iron from rare springs; follow the sun;
Go far
To get the beam of some medicinal star;
Or in your anguish run
The gauntlet of all zones to an ultimate one.

Fever and chill
Punish you still,
Earth has no zone to work against your ill.

Burn in the jewelled desert with the toad.
Catch lace
Of evening mist across your haunted face;
Or walk in upper air, the slanted road.
It will not lift that load;
Nor will large seas undo your subtle ill.

Nothing can cure and nothing kill
What ails your eyes, what cuts your pulse in two,
And not kill you.

1929

Genevieve Taggard

TO A ROMANTIC

You hold your eager head
Too high in the air, you walk
As if the sleepy dead
Had never fallen to drowse
From the sublimest talk
Of many a vehement house.
Your head, so turned, turns eyes
Into a vagrant West;
Fixing an iron mood
In an Ozymandias' breast,
And because your clamorous blood
Beats an impermanent rest

You think the dead arise
Westward and fabulous:
The dead are those whose lies
Were doors to a narrow house.

1925

Allen Tate

BARTER

Life has loveliness to sell,
All beautiful and splendid things,
Blue waves whitened on a cliff,
Soaring fire that sways and sings,
And children's faces looking up
Holding wonder like a cup.

Life has loveliness to sell,
Music like a curve of gold,
Scent of pine trees in the rain,
Eyes that love you, arms that hold,
And for your spirit's still delight,
Holy thoughts that star the night.

Spend all you have for loveliness,
Buy it and never count the cost;
For one white singing hour of peace
Count many a year of strife well lost,
And for a breath of ecstasy
Give all you have been or could be.

1917

Sara Teasdale

WOOD SONG

I heard a wood thrush in the dusk
Twirl three notes and make a star—
My heart that walked with bitterness
Came back from very far.

Three shining notes were all he had,
And yet they made a starry call—
I caught life back against my breast
And kissed it, scars and all.

1917

Sara Teasdale

“LET IT BE FORGOTTEN”

Let it be forgotten, as a flower is forgotten,
Forgotten as a fire that once was singing gold,
Let it be forgotten for ever and ever,
Time is a kind friend, he will make us old.

If anyone asks, say it was forgotten
Long and long ago,
As a flower, as a fire, as a hushed footfall
In a long forgotten snow.

1920

Sara Teasdale

"THERE WILL BE STARS"

There will be stars over the place forever;
 Though the house we loved and the street we loved
 are lost,
Every time the earth circles her orbit
 On the night the autumn equinox is crossed,
Two stars we knew, poised on the peak of midnight
 Will reach their zenith; stillness will be deep;
There will be stars over the place forever,
 There will be stars forever, while we sleep.

1925

Sara Teasdale

THE MOST-SACRED MOUNTAIN

Space, and the twelve clean winds of heaven,
And this sharp exultation, like a cry, after the slow six
 thousand steps of climbing!
This is Tai Shan, the beautiful, the most holy.

Below my feet the foot-hills nestle, brown with flecks
 of green; and lower down the flat brown plain,
 the floor of earth, stretches away to blue
 infinity.

Beside me in this airy space the temple roofs cut their
 slow curves against the sky,
And one black bird circles above the void.

Space, and the twelve clean winds are here;
And with them broods eternity—a swift, white peace,
 a presence manifest.

The rhythm ceases here. Time has no place. This is
the end that has no end.

Here when Confucius came, a half a thousand years
before the Nazarene, he stepped, with me, thus
into timelessness.

The stone beside us waxes old, the carven stone that
says: *On this spot once Confucius stood and felt
the smallness of the world below.*

The stone grows old.

Eternity

Is not for stones.

But I shall go down from this airy space, this swift
white peace, this stinging exultation;

And time will close about me, and my soul stir to the
rhythm of the daily round.

Yet, having known, life will not press so close, and
always I shall feel time ravel thin about me;

For once I stood

In the white windy presence of eternity.

1917

Eunice Tietjens

JEAN SINGING

Lavender's blue in the garden,
Lavender's bright.

When I am blind, my Beloved,
You shall have sight.

I shall be dust in the garden,
Deep from the storm.
You shall be shining still then,
You shall be warm.

When I am hidden in shadow
Under the years,
Call to me, tell me of all things
Here among tears.

I shall remember the glory
Filling this place,
The firebird calling through the rainbow:
"Lift up your face."

I shall remember how Beauty
Over Death, over Birth,
Bridges a streaming music
Here on the earth.

Only if wounds and the sorrow
Made by men's hands
Still should outdeepen the waters,
Darken the lands,

Even though day should recall me
Then to its gleam,
I shall remember and turn me
Back to my dream.

1919

Ridgely Torrence

THE SON

(Southern Ohio Market Town)

I heard an old farm-wife,
Selling some barley,
Mingle her life with life
And the name "Charley."

Saying: "The crop's all in,
We're about through now;
Long nights will soon begin,
We're just we two now.

"Twelve bushels at sixty cents,
It's all I carried—
He sickened making fence;
He was to be married—

"It feels like frost was near—
His hair was curly.
The spring was late that year,
But the harvest early."

1916

Ridgely Torrence

TO YOUR HEART

The path to your heart is a New England roadway
Under autumn skies,
Sudden with loop and twist and turning,
Sharp with surprise.

At the edges asters smile, and gentians lift
Their delicate faces,
And the birches murmur their leafy secrets
Above the fern's laces.

But the way grows rough, and the wind blows shriller,
And colder than death.
There are cruel hills which stifle the courage
And steal the breath.

The path to your heart is a New England roadway
That I tread alone.
It begins with the whisper of friendly birches
And ends with a stone.

1926

Virginia Lyne Tunstall

PRAYER FOR A NEW HOUSE

May nothing evil cross this door,
And may ill-fortune never pry
About these windows; may the roar
And rains go by.

Strengthened by faith, these rafters will
Withstand the battering of the storm;
This hearth, though all the world grow chill,
Will keep us warm.

Peace shall walk softly through these rooms,
Touching our lips with holy wine,

Till every casual corner blooms
Into a shrine.

Laughter shall drown the raucous shout;
And, though these sheltering walls are thin
May they be strong to keep hate out
And hold love in.

1918

Louis Untermeyer

TANGENTIAL

(For E. A. R.)

The eyes of more than Tilbury Town,
Seeing too much to trust their ears,
Had watched him, with a ghostly frown,
Walking among his ghostly peers.
For years, they saw him dim, distraught,
Torn by himself and various labors;
But what they said or what they thought
Could not be gathered from his neighbors.

Yet there were some who told of strange
Communion at incredible hours,
In which, one heard, he would exchange
Small talk with far from heavenly powers.
Rumor, in dark and dubious tones,
Had croaked, though no one would affirm it,
He brewed new wine from old dried bones
And sang queer ballads for a hermit.

And others, still more circumspect,
Controlled themselves with his control;
Or if they chanced to recollect
The vision of a fettered soul
That burst its bonds and, unafraid,
Struck out to save itself from drowning,
Chose to consider it a shade
And crossed themselves and muttered "Browning."

Meanwhile, the rest of us who stood
Gnawing our fingers in confusion,
Busied ourselves as best we could
And hurried him to his seclusion.
We could not stop to see him rise,
We who could only see the prison,
Heedless of unsuspected skies
In which another star had risen.

1923

Louis Untermeyer

SPRING THUNDER

Listen. The wind is still,
And far away in the night—
See! The uplands fill
With a running light.

Open the doors. It is warm,
And where the sky was clear—
Look! The head of a storm
That marches here!

Come under the trembling hedge—
Fast, although you fumble. . . .
There! Did you hear the edge
Of winter crumble?

1924

Mark Van Doren

FORMER BARN LOT

Once there was a fence here,
And the grass came and tried,
Leaning from the pasture,
To get inside. . .

But colt feet trampled it,
Turning it brown:
Until the farmer moved
And the fence fell down;

Then any bird saw,
Under the wire,
Grass nibbling inward
Like green fire.

1925

Mark Van Doren

NIGHT-LILAC

Lilac alone,
Standing so quiet, so dim, outside
Till the door-light died
On cricket and stone,

Do you sleep at last?

Or beyond this night that has taken my yard

Do you stare more hard,

In a night more vast,

At the great white things

That move the outermost world: the whale,

The stallion, the pale

High planet with rings,

The raven, the bull,

And the midnight mountain that never is black?

Lilac, come back!

My lawn is too full

Of the dark; and the fine

Impalpable shadows will never be still.

Return as you will,

Dim lilac, and shine.

1926

Mark Van Doren

RECLUSE

She moved, a saint among us, more concerned

With altitudes and vistas out of sight

Than with the things at hand, and so she turned

Her back upon the world, and that was right.

And yet we always felt in spite of her

Acceptance of the tenets and the Book

She might have joined the cult of Lucifer

Instead of following the path she took.

She was too versed in rubrics of the mind
To heed the body's hunger and be fed,
Too skilled in prayer and fasting, too refined
To look beyond the sacramental bread.
And if her passion ever had been stirred,
No one had known it by her spoken word.

1926

Harold Vinal

GARDEN WATERS

If in his garden all night fell the stream
Noisy and silver over the moon-dark stone,
It was not so with the voiceless waters of dream,
Monstrously tumbled, falling with no tone.

In this man's garden, as in any other
Where decent waters through the night have flowed,
Is converse of a musical small clamor,
And men by crags have stopped against the loud

Torn cataract or hollow-bosomed flood
In solace of that full nocturnal tongue
Calling in kinship to the buried blood;
More terrible breaks the torrent with no song.

Though garden waters are not broad or black
Within them still sometimes, I think, is hid
The obscure image of the season's wreck,
The dead leaf and the summer's chrysalid.

1928

Robert Penn Warren

CROESUS IN AUTUMN

If the distrait verdure cleave not to the branch
Less powerfully than flesh to the fervent bone,
Should then gruff Croesus on the village bench
Lament the absolute gold of summer gone?

Though this gray guy be no Aurelius,
Surveying the ilex and the Latin vine,
He might consider a little piteous
The green and fatal tribe's decline.

But in Kentucky against a dwindling sun
The riven red oak and the thick sweet gum
Yet hold the northward hills whose final stone
In dark ogive supports the fractured loam.

The seasons down our country have a way
To stir the bald and metaphysic skull,
Fuddling the stout cortex so mortally
That it cries no more, Proud heart be still, be still,

I bring you but this broken metaphor,
So haul your careful carcass home, old fellow,
More Roman than the doddering emperor
Now green is blown and every gold gone swallow.

1928

Robert Penn Warren

REQUIESCAT

I will go out to the night and the wind
And the clean rain coming down,

For the walls of the sky are not unkind
As the gray walls of a town.

I will go out to the high hill
And a cleft beneath a pine;
In the heart of a rock it is dry and still
And the heart of the rock is mine.

I will go out with a cloak drawn close,
With the cool rain in my face;
And my pillow by night shall be a stone
In a strangely quiet place.

And I will not care if the rain come down,
Or if the night be chill,
For I shall have left the gray-walled town
On feet forever still.

I will go out by myself alone
To the dark night and the sky
Till I am a brother to the stone,
Mingled inseparably.

Into my breast let the good rain seep
Soothing as a prayer;
The arbutus will remember and creep
Out of my tangled hair.

When my two hands and my two feet
Quiet at last shall lie,
I shall not know if the rain be sweet
With my face to the open sky.

The night shall come like an emperor's pall,
The dawn like a crimson stain . . .
I rise tonight for my coronal
Out in the wind and rain.

1922

Willard Wattles

EXILE

I have made grief a gorgeous, queenly thing,
And worn my melancholy with an air.
My tears were big as stars to deck my hair,
My silence stunning as a sapphire ring.
Oh, more than any light the dark could fling
A glamour over me to make me rare,
Better than any color I could wear
The pearly tissue that the shadows bring.
What is there left to joy for such as I?
What throne can dawn upraise for me who found
The dusk so royal and so rich a one?
Laughter will whirl and whistle on the sky,
Far from his riot I shall stand uncrowned,
Disrobed, bereft, an outcast in the sun.

1920

Winifred Welles

BOY

Will no one see that in your wood
The season is not spring but winter?

You are too proud to wear a hood,
You love to drive a crystal splinter
Through your bare hands, your naked feet.
White nuts, snow berries you will eat
If wild birds bring them, on your tongue
The taste of ice is piercing sweet.
Will no one say that being young
Is being hurt, is being bled,
Enduring dagger-thirsts, wolf-hungers,
Is being self-raised from the dead
More times than boys have toes and fingers?

Does no one know the unicorn
Kneels down to you as to your sister?
If, with his single cryptic horn,
He has crept close and sharply kissed her,
He is no less your animal—
He will run with you till befall
Your freshet, flower and furrowed mould.
Will no one say that growing tall
Is crouching down and feeling cold
Outside dark windows starred with frost?
That being innocent is only
Being locked out, alone and lost,
White as the snow, as still, as lonely?

1929

Winifred Welles

I SOUGHT YOU

I sought you but I could not find you, all night long
I called you, but you would not answer—all the night

I wandered over hill and valley; heaven was bright
With crowded stars, and I was calling you in many
a song.

The road through wood and meadow rambled here
and there:
Few were the travellers on that lonely road, and none
Had heard of you, by wood or meadowland—not one
Had heard of you, or seen you passing anywhere.

At midnight, thirsting for your loveliness, I lay
Under the shadow of the leafy hill, and cried
Three times, calling upon your name. No voice
replied. . . .
The pebbly brooks went babbling, babbling, all the
way.

The waters had a drowsy sound, the hills were steep—
My heart grew tired travelling; but there was no place
That suited me, and I was homesick for your face.
Dreaming of you, at the wood's edge I fell asleep.

1925

John Hall Wheelock

THIS QUIET DUST

Here in my curving hands I cup
This quiet dust. I lift it up.

Here is the mother of all thought,
Of this the shining heavens are wrought,
The laughing lips, the feet that rove,

The face, the body that you love:
Mere dust, no more—yet nothing less;
And this has suffered consciousness,
Passion, and terror; this again
Shall suffer passion, death, and pain.

For, as all flesh must die, so all,
Now dust, shall live. 'Tis natural,
Yet hardly do I understand—
Here in the hollow of my hand
A bit of God Himself I keep,
Between two vigils fallen asleep.

1924

John Hall Wheelock

NOON: AMAGANSETT BEACH

Glory—glory to God in the highest—and on earth,
Glory! The everlasting sun
Has laid his hand upon the harp-string, with the
 music of his mirth
Heaven and ocean are one chord, in unison.

He has spoken, he has spoken—from his midmost
 throne
In the blue hollow of noon, he has spoken! Heaven
 has heard
The sound of the song of his shining; he has made
 known
To listening space his paeon, his joy-awakening word,

Who sheds his light upon the earth—and upon the
dark place,
Light! And upon the waters of the sea,
Light! O Father, pour down thy light upon me, touch
my face!
Hallow me, my Father—even me.

Here, where the long ranges of the dunes roll
Their tawny billows to the east and to the west, and
against the sky
Flutters the pale beach-grass, fresh is the wind—and
the whole
Clear hollow of heaven is full of the wine of thy
glory, even as I.

The waves curve upward—they fail, they fall,
Dragging, dragging, along the dim sea-reach,
The heavy hem of the garment of the waters;
rhythmical, rhythmical,
Is the rustle of the sea's robe upon the beach.

Along the shallows, along the far shore-line
They burst in thunder and light—where the spent
surges lie,
The tongue of the foam is a tongue of fire; the hollows
of the breakers shine,
Darken—and make music as they die.

But out where the farther waters have their sleep,
On the pale meadows of ocean, on the barren fields
and bare,
That the sea-bird wanders, that the sea-wind wanders—
on the illimitable Deep,
Silence. The silence of the immensity is like a prayer.

Interminable—interminable—interminable—the void
sea,

The many ways, the many waves. In the huge round
Of the sorrowful heavens, in the hushed vacancy,
No voice. Vastness without bound.

This is my heart's country: these lonely lands
Are one with my own lonely heart; these winds and
waves that roam
Old, desolate ways forever, they are one with me —
these sterile sands
And bitter waters. Here is my heart's home.

Amid these large horizons and spaces that she loves,
My spirit's thought, on lorn adventurings
And inconsolable quests intent, endlessly moves—
And spreads upon the eternal solitude her fleeting
wings:

Lost as a sea-bird on the changeless, changing,
Pale pastures lost, as a sea-bird on the wild waste
astray,
Searching the everlasting reaches—failing—faltering—
like a sea-bird ranging—
Wandering, wandering the wide way.

• • • • •

Loneliness—loneliness forever. Dune beyond dune,
Stretches the infinite loneliness—pale sand and paler
grass,
Pale beaches, mile upon mile. In the immensity of
noon

A hawk moves upon the wind. Clouds darken, and
pass. . . .

The sound of the breathing of the sea is hushed, on
the far shore
Her robe lies fallen; the slack waves, one by one,
Rise up and curl over, foam up and fall over: from
the blue vault to the blue floor
Heaven is a shining room filled full of the sun.

He hallows the waters. The benediction of his light
is shed
Upon the proud waters. Emerald—turquoise—chryso-
prase,
Glitter the waters! The garment of his glory is
spread
Upon the everlasting waters, upon the everlasting
ways.

1924

John Hall Wheelock

REVISITANTS

We who went where Dante went
And Persephone,
You can know us by the bent
Brow, and shadowy,

By the eyes that still would dream
(Through your loudest word)
Of the kindness in some stream
Or some singing bird:

Soft our words to all who live,
Courteously we go
(There's so little to forgive,
Knowing what we know!)

Yet have patience if we stare
At your whimpering crowd . . .
Where the Nine Great Circles were
No man cried aloud.

1923

Margaret Widdemer

THE GOLDEN FLEECE

I know that life is Jason,
And that beauty is the witch-maiden helping him.
I know that the soft, luminous night of stars
Is the golden fleece he is seeking.
I know that in the beginning
He sowed the boulders, the teeth of dead ages,
And the innumerable armored cities have arisen.
I know that he has thrown among them love and
 desire,
And they have warred and shall war with each other
 until the end.
And if you doubt the least word I have said,
Come out on the dark beach some strange summer
 night
And watch the huge quivering serpent of the ocean
Still coiled around the trunk of the tree of paradise.

1921

Oscar Williams

LATER

I went to the place where my youth took birth
In the slow, round kiss of an amorous girl,
When sonnets and lace were the measures of earth,
When death was forgotten and life was a whirl.

I addled my brain with the memories flown
Of Heatherby Kaiser and Muriel Moore;
I thought of the women and men I had known,—
The glittering eyes and the bolt on the door—

The warm, gray walls and the odor of musk,
The wine, the piano, the glistening feet,
The eyes grown hazy like shadows at dusk,
The minstreling music that rose from the street.

I thought of Elise with her soft, gold hair;
And the buttonhook hung from the chandelier.
The spirit of passionate youth had been there—
But somehow the dream of it wasn't quite clear.

For the place had been altered; the walls were red,
And the woodwork was stained with a desolate
brown;
And they told me a woman had lain in the bed
For a year and a half with the curtains down.

1913

Willard Huntington Wright

WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

What of the night
And the eventual silences?
Art thou not cold with the knowledge of decay
And the uncompromising reaches of the earth?
What of the night
When the tune falters and the blood chills?
When thou art one with the grass
And the underbrush of the world,
Wilt thou forget the names of flowers,
The rhythm of song and the lips, still balmy with the
 breasts of women?
When thou and the fog on the hilltop are as brother
 and sister,
Wilt thou forget utterly the ways of men,
The clash of swords and the sting of wine,
The dim horizons and the grace of girls?
When thou art alone eternally
What of the night?

Where will God be
When thou¹ art swathed in silence;
When the wreckage of dreams has crushed thee
And the lust for springtimes dissolved thee?
Wilt thou have visions only of the dawn
And autumn sunsets?
Will the memory of women's faces haunt thy grave?
Will the odor of blue flowers find thy dust?
When thou art choking on the calm indifference of
 youth
And the everlasting beauty of trees,

Wilt thou dream only of the June,
The love of women and the great democracy of men?

When thou has fought and failed,
And thy brow has withered laurelless,
And thy name has been effaced by the insatiable
winds,
And thou hast gone out at the Western gate
To join the laggards of the dead,
Wilt thou crave only the withheld success,
The transitory fame of twilight years?
Will thy soul cry out only for the song,
The red dawn and the glad triumph of love?

Wilt thou indeed forget the days of pain,
The ineffectual prayers,
The lies of time and the bitterness of defeat?
Or, remembering these things,
Wilt thou forget the hands of women and the rude
love of men,
And be glad of thy dark quietude?

When thou art part of the impending gloom,
I deem that life will seem to thee
In no such wise,—
But rather thou wilt dream it as a whole;
Not as a song, nor yet a broken bell;
But all that thou hast been—the great tears,
The rain, the kisses and the flutes,
The old sorrows and the hills at dawn,
Much laughter and much grief and the stern fight.
And thou shalt know how all of life is gain—

The gold of youth, the gray defeat of age—
How in the soul's inharmony there lies
The incoherent unity of things.

1913

Willard Huntington Wright

VELVET SHOES

Let us walk in the white snow
In a soundless space;
With footsteps quiet and slow,
At a tranquil pace,
Under veils of white lace.

I shall go shod in silk,
And you in wool,
White as a white cow's milk,
More beautiful
Than the breast of a gull.

We shall walk through the still town
In a windless peace;
We shall step upon white down,
Upon silver fleece,
Upon softer than these.

We shall walk in velvet shoes:
Wherever we go
Silence will fall like dews
On white silence below.
We shall walk in the snow.

1921

Elinor Wylie

HYMN TO EARTH

Farewell, incomparable element,
Whence man arose, where he shall not return;
And hail, imperfect urn
Of his last ashes, and his firstborn fruit;
Farewell, the long pursuit,
And all the adventures of his discontent;
The voyages which sent
His heart averse from home:
Metal of clay, permit him that he come
To thy slow-burning fire as to a hearth;
Accept him as a particle of earth.

Fire, being divided from the other three,
It lives removed, or secret at the core;
Most subtle of the four,
When air flies not, nor water flows,
It disembodied goes,
Being light, elixir of the first decree,
More volatile than he;
With strength and power to pass
Through space, where never his least atom was:
He has no part in it, save as his eyes
Have drawn its emanation from the skies.

A wingless creature heavier than air,
He is rejected of its quintessence;
Coming and going hence,
In the twin minutes of his birth and death,
He may inhale as breath,
As breath relinquish heaven's atmosphere,
Yet in it have no share,

Nor can survive therein
Where its outer edge is filtered pure and thin:
It doth but lend its crystal to his lungs
For his early crying, and his final songs.

The element of water has denied
Its child; it is no more his element;
It never will relent;
Its silver harvests are more sparsely given
Than the rewards of heaven,
And he shall drink cold comfort at its side:
The water is too wide:
The seamew and the full
Feather a nest made soft and pitiful
Upon its foam; he has not any part
In the long swell of sorrow at its heart.

Hail and farewell, beloved element,
Whence he departed, and his parent once;
See where thy spirit runs
Which for so long hath had the moon to wife;
Shall this support his life
Until the arches of the waves be bent
And grow shallow and spent?
Wisely it cast him forth
With his dead weight of burdens nothing worth,
Leaving him, for the universal years,
A little seawater to make his tears.

Hail, element of earth, receive thy own,
And cherish, at thy charitable breast,
This man, this mongrel beast:
He plows the sand, and, at his hardest need,

He sows himself for seed;
He plows the furrow, and in this lies down
Before the corn is grown;
Between the apple bloom
And the ripe apple is sufficient room
In time, and matter, to consume his love
And make him parcel of a cypress grove.

Receive him as thy lover for an hour
Who will not weary, by a longer stay,
The kind embrace of clay;
Even within thine arms he is dispersed
To nothing, as at first;
The air flings downward from its four-quartered
tower
Him whom the flames devour;
At the full tide, at the flood,
The sea is mingled with his salty blood:
The traveler dust, although the dust be vile,
Sleeps as thy lover for a little while.

1920

Elinor Wylie

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Wide-eyed all night in the weatherworn inn,	
LEW SARETT	364
Will no one see that in your wood	
WINIFRED WELLES	398
Willow-tassels grow in tremors of the spring wind	
WITTER BYNNER	18
Wisdom, I think, is made of these	
TED OLSON	342
With eyes of love and tongue of steel	
JOHN L'HEUREUX, S.J.	123
With peepers winding marshy clocks	
LEIGH HANES	90
Within the mirror of an oval dream	
LOUISE TOWNSEND NICHOLL	340
With wings held close and slim neck bent,	
LEONORA SPEYER	375
Wrapped in a cloak	
MELVILLE CANE	253

You hold your eager head	
ALLEN TATE	383
You may never see rain, unless you see	
WITTER BYNNER	250
Youth is a fantasy, youth is a flame,	
ROBERT AVRETT	7

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